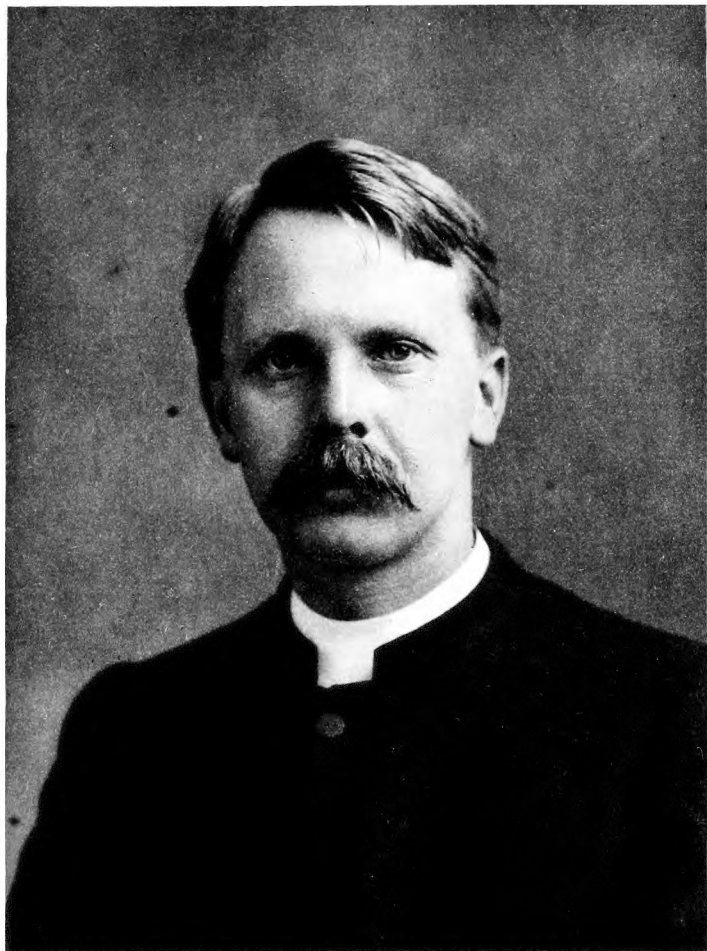




ARTHUR MOORHOUSE







Arthur Mowbray.

# ARTHUR MOORHOUSE

## *Memories and Aftermath*

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# CONTENTS



## MEMORIES

	PAGE
I. INTRODUCTION . . . . .	3
II. EARLY DAYS . . . . .	15
III. ST. ANDREWS . . . . .	28
IV. HEADINGLEY . . . . .	45
V. CIRCUIT WORK . . . . .	72
VI. DIDSBURY . . . . .	105

## AFTERMATH

THE LITERATURE OF KING ARTHUR . . . . .	123
TENNYSON'S KING ARTHUR . . . . .	160
COLLEGE LECTURES ON ELIJAH . . . . .	197
THREE SERMONS . . . . .	235
PAPER ON PULPIT PRAYERS . . . . .	279
COMMUNION ADDRESS . . . . .	303
WORSHIP . . . . .	314





# MEMORIES



# I

## INTRODUCTION

THIS little book is an attempt to fix those scattered reflections of the character of Arthur Moorhouse that linger in the memory of his friends, and to combine them with his own written and spoken words into a single recognizable portrait. There is no intention to set him on a pedestal of greatness, still less to place him in the niche of a saint; neither claim could be made without recalling the hearty incredulous laughter with which it would have been greeted by the man himself. He had gifts, but they were not of that transcendent order to which the term genius can be applied; he was always a worker, but much of his work was tillage that disappeared in the soil on which it was expended; his season of mellow fruitfulness

had not arrived. But he was essentially interesting, human, full of surprises, overflowing with spring-time vitality, not encased in dead bark of conventions, or stripped and disillusioned of buoyant hopes. His enthusiasms had the virgin freshness and energy of unfolding leaves; in contact with him one felt nearer to the hidden pulses of that 'something far more deeply interfused'—

A motion and a spirit, that impels  
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,  
And rolls through all things.

The sole qualification that could justify a portrait of such a man, is that it should be life-like. The present attempt is frankly appreciative rather than critical; not because anything is concealed—there was, in fact, nothing to conceal—but because it represents him as he was seen by his friends.

First impressions of Arthur Moorhouse were often sharply defined and unforgettable, but they rarely did him justice. Striking in appearance, direct in speech, abrupt in manner, there was nothing blurred or hazy about the image he

stamped on those who met him for the first time, but it was a silhouette, not a photograph. It showed nothing of his personality but the edge. The profile might be correct in outline, but it lacked light and shade, and gave no window into his soul. He was a standing exception to the somewhat tattered maxim that first impressions are always most reliable. Any friction he had to overcome in life was largely set up by mistaken inferences as to his character based on the first clear-cut stamp of impact. No one has more aptly described this than his friend Professor Findlay—

‘My recollections of Mr. Moorhouse go back to July 1888, when he appeared at Didsbury as a candidate for the ministry. I can see him now as he stood before the Examination Committee—a figure to catch the eye amongst a dozen others—of medium height and active build; youthful beyond his years (he was then twenty-three); in complexion exceedingly fair, and his hair a flaxen white; head erect, and expression keen, alert, and almost combative, he

seemed to be scrutinizing the examiners rather than they him, and was manifestly neither afraid of them nor of any mortal thing. I put him down in my notes as "ready, self-possessed, and easy in manner." He passed a good examination; but I confess that I carried away from that encounter the idea that he was a little jaunty and self-confident, and I was not over-anxious to see him at Headingley. I have often quoted this experience to myself as a warning against judging by first impressions; for a more serious, modest, and right-minded student than we proved him to be, a man more free from self-importance and presumption, one could not wish to find. But the manner, though misinterpreted then, was an index to the constitution of the man. He was sanguine in temperament, frank, buoyant, open-eyed—a youth of high mettle and of cool head. Afterwards one learnt to know how warm and sound was his heart, and how reverent and sincere his spirit.'

But it was possible to pass from the first superficial shock of antagonism to deeper

knowledge and high esteem, and yet only to see one side of his character. The greatest charm of the man, to those who knew him best, was the perfectly natural way in which the same features could be set with a stern sense of duty and seriousness, or relaxed in irrepressible whole-hearted fun and frolicsomeness. These two aspects changed their relative position as his life went on. During his college days, casual observers sometimes thought him frivolous, but his friends loved him because they saw the spiritual earnestness behind his laughing eyes. Later in life the more serious side came to the front, and the fun that made him so lovably human and complete was pushed into the background, and its liveliest manifestations reserved for a strictly intimate circle. Those who only saw him in the pulpit or tutorial chair little suspected what a schoolboy let loose he could be at times ; and yet those who saw both sides most fully knew best how entirely consistent and true to himself he was in each of them.

No portrait of him can be true that fails



to recognize an unwavering faith as the centre round which all his activities revolved. To those who were bound up with Arthur Moorhouse and the writer in a common circle of college and ministerial friendship, it may seem strange that such a portrait should be attempted by a member of that circle who has fallen silent in the presence of life's mysteries. He can only plead that no divergence of theological opinion ever opened any gulf between his friend and himself. Not only was the hand-grasp of affection unbroken, but the old freedom of expression suffered no check. If the writer has done less than justice to certain lines of the portrait, others have supplied the omission, and on all matters of religious belief and experience he has gladly allowed his friend to speak for himself. Not that Mr. Moorhouse ever kept a diary of his own moods and feelings. Introspection, whether of the ecstatic or despondent type, seemed to him wholly idle, morbid, and unprofitable. He kept up the warmth of his soul by vigorous exercise in external duties, not by turning his attention to his

emotions and trying to stir them to a blaze. Quite foreign to his taste were all diaries of spiritual pathology. Amiel to him was 'a thorough weed.' His advice to a friend of a more subjective turn of mind was to 'burn Thomas Carlyle and all his works, read nothing but fiction and the *Daily Mail*, take cold tubs and golf, and row all your friends in turn. Why on earth don't you *smoke*—do something desperate? Read *Red Pottage* — anything — find the lost digamma or go out to South Africa and write a book.' Even in his letters, intimate and self-revealing as they often were, he rarely dwelt on his moods and feelings, but the extracts quoted later throw a light upon his character that is all the clearer because unpremeditated and indirect.

The sermons printed at the end of this volume were, just as much as the letters, a genuine expression of the man. As you heard them spoken, you felt they came hot from his heart. Intense with conviction, fresh and accurate in exposition, weighted with solemnity, and glowing with the colours of life and experience, a white heat of pas-

sionate appeal quivering in their tones, which were oftenest low and tender, but sometimes rising to a cry of warning or encouragement—here, you felt, is a man who means what he says; nay more, who *lives* what he says.

Unfortunately, very few of the sermons exist in a form suitable for printing. In preparing for the pulpit he invariably filled four pages of a sheet of letter-paper with notes in a small neat hand, but wrote nothing *in extenso* unless it were actually needed for publication. Four college lectures on Elijah had been thus prepared for the *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, and are included here by the courtesy of the Editor. For verbatim reports of two other sermons and a children's address I am indebted to Mr. C. H. Brotherton, of Weaste, Manchester.

There was one partial and somewhat remarkable exception to Mr. Moorhouse's habit of writing only condensed notes. In the row of files containing his notes of sermons and addresses was one labelled WORSHIP. It was found to contain some fifty or more half-sheets of notepaper, on each of which was written out *in extenso*,

or nearly so, two pulpit prayers. I had known how unique and sacred a place this part of the service took in his mind, and here was the evidence of how he had laboured in the silence of his study to prepare himself for leading the prayers of the congregation. The result was the exact opposite of anything artificial; it was simply a more complete and adequate expression of his inmost thought and of the needs and aspirations of his people. No one could hear him conduct a service without feeling that it was in the prayers he was most truly himself. They revealed a spirit humble, reverent, and sympathetic, and were uttered in words that never fell off from perfect fitness and beauty of expression, often stamped with the hall-mark of psalmists and prophets. In his sermons he was usually urgent, insistent, grappling with the judgement and conscience, and spurring on his hearers relentlessly in pursuit of high ideals. When, as often happened, he invited criticism, I used to tell him he needed more of the Quaker element in his preaching—to sit down in front of some great mountain

of truth, and ponder it; to let the gentle dews of comfort sink into the souls of tired hearers; to give them moments of restfulness instead of always urging them on at full speed; in a word, to bring into his sermons more of the attitude of his prayers. He admitted the truth of the criticism, and almost the last time I heard him preach he selected the 23rd Psalm as his topic, to show that he understood, and could on occasion lead his flock beside the waters of restfulness.

To put light into the eyes of the portrait, and open a window of self-revelation into his deepest soul, some of these prayers are here included. I have evaded the onus of making a critical selection by simply taking those written on two half-sheets that were found after his death in the Bible he always took on his preaching appointments; probably they embody the substance of the last public prayers he offered. A further illustration of how profoundly he felt on this subject is afforded by the paper on 'Pulpit Prayers,' written for the Manchester Ministers' Meeting, and here printed.

On his desk lay the notes of an address on Acts xxii. 1: 'A Model for Preachers.' It was no doubt the one he had prepared to give to the students at a college sacramental service, but before the date fixed for its delivery they had heard his voice for the last time. It is fresh and original in matter, lighted up with illustration, and only needed the insertion of a few conjunctions and auxiliary verbs to make the notes read as a connected discourse. It possesses the unique interest of being, unknown to himself, his last message to the men he loved. It ends abruptly with the symbol *Xt*. A few lines above he had quoted from Myers' *St. Paul*, and it is possible he meant to close his address with other verses from the same source.

Christ ! I am Christ's ! and let the name suffice you,  
Ay, for me too He greatly hath sufficed :  
Lo ! with no winning words I would entice you,  
Paul has no honour and no friend but Christ.

Yea, thro' life, death, thro' sorrow and thro' sinning,  
He shall suffice me, for He hath sufficed :  
Christ is the end, for Christ was the beginning,  
Christ the beginning, for the end is Christ.

They sum up, at any rate, the teaching of the address, and are an epitome of the message which Mr. Moorhouse felt it to be the supreme purpose of his life to deliver.

## II

### EARLY DAYS

FIVE miles south of Huddersfield, on the steep side of a wide, deep valley that drains the northern slope of the Peak Plateau, there stands a solitary row of seven stone cottages and two farmhouses, all strongly built and snug, though weather-stained and mellowed by age. From their front, which faces uphill, a narrow water-worn lane climbs up and up to the sky-line. Holly trees fringe the lane, whence perhaps the name of the hamlet—Hollingreave. A few paces from the doors a spout of clear water tinkles into its trough, and explains, no doubt, the choice of the site. At the back, which looks across the valley to the setting sun, a row of five tall sycamores breaks the force of the westerly winds.

Among the children who played round the



doors and were lulled to sleep by the sound of the wind in the sycamores in the early forties of the last century was a boy called Ben Moorhouse. More than sixty years afterwards he took me to visit the scenes of his youth, where also his son Arthur first opened his eyes to the light. Every tree and stone recalled early memories, invested now with deeper significance because they emerged from the buried past into which the life of that son had vanished. A brother of Arthur was with us, and together we listened to the ebb and flow of reminiscences.

In the village of Wooldale, just across the valley, Ben Moorhouse was attending the Wesleyan Sunday school during the stormy days of the Methodist Reform Movement of 1849, when several ministers and a large number of laymen were excluded or voluntarily seceded from the 'Old Body' and formed themselves into the separate branch of Methodism now known as the United Methodist Free Church. He vividly recalled an eventful Sunday when the teachers rose in a body and led their scholars from the building. In due time he became a

teacher himself, and eventually superintendent of the Sunday school, as well as class-leader and local preacher.

His eldest son, Arthur, was born at Hollingreave on February 3, 1865. Three years later he removed to Linthwaite, a village on the outskirts of Huddersfield. Here he remained eight years. There was no Methodist Free Church service within reach of Linthwaite, so Mr. Moorhouse quietly buried the hatchet and joined the 'Old Body,' with his family. He was placed on the Wesleyan Plan as a local preacher, and took services in his own and several adjoining circuits.

Arthur attended the Wesleyan elementary day school and Sunday school, both held in the same building. Faint echoes still linger of a humorous recitation he gave at one of the Sunday-school anniversaries so popular in Yorkshire, when the first indications of his powers of impersonation appeared. One may still stand on the old high platform, with one's head not much below the level of the heavy beams that support the roof, and from that standpoint it is easy to appreciate the favourite maxim of the

homely old Yorkshireman who trained the little reciters—‘Hold up thy head, lad, and look at t’ balks!’

The only other memories of these early years are such as were deeply scored by moments of parental anxiety: a fall down a flight of steps that left a scar on his chin for life; a narrow escape from drowning, when he stuck head foremost in the mud of the Colne, and was hauled out by a passing workman.

When Arthur was eleven years old his father moved his home into Huddersfield. Here six sons and two daughters grew up in health and vigour, and when the eldest was struck down there had been no break in the family for thirty years. On Sunday they all sat in a roomy pew just beneath the pulpit in Buxton Road Chapel; and on week days the children who were old enough were sent to the nearest elementary school, called Outcote Bank. Arthur passed through the usual standards, and afterwards spent a couple of years as a day-boy at Huddersfield College. His reports show that he held his own there as third or fourth boy in a

class of twenty or more pupils, his best subjects being English grammar and composition.

The atmosphere of his home combined the strictest integrity with a sweet reasonableness of disposition and a charity that believed the best of every man. Apart from the family prayers on Sunday evenings, the subject of religion was not specifically referred to. The ruling principles of the household were order, thoroughness, reverence, and loyal if undemonstrative affection. Never was maternal trait more perfectly illustrated in a son than in the absolutely perfect order that was found in Arthur Moorhouse's study after he had been snatched away without a moment's warning.

Shortly after his fourteenth birthday there are indications of a crisis in his moral and spiritual development. Such a crisis is a normal experience when the boy is passing into the man, and deciding for himself whether he will resolutely obey his awakening higher impulses or become the bond-slave of the flesh. Methodism has always regarded it as due to a special interposition

of divine influence, and has insisted on conversion, either gradual or instantaneous, as the first and indispensable qualification for all spiritual experience and effort. In the case of Arthur Moorhouse the crisis was neither violent nor attended with the morbid consequences that sometimes follow a radical upheaval of character. Home influences, and a hereditary balance and sanity of temperament, saved him from that.

The earliest birth-pangs of the new life, the sense of personal shortcoming and self-abasement expressed by the phrase 'conviction of sin,' came to him while hearing his father preach one Sunday evening. About the same time he began to attend a Wesleyan class-meeting at Buxton Road Chapel, apparently in response to a personal invitation from the leader, Mr. Richard Riley, one of those earnest, genial, magnetic souls who attract and influence all the young, ardent life of the church to which they belong. Arthur joined the class on February 6, 1879, three days after his fourteenth birthday, and in March of the same year he was admitted on trial as a

member of the Wesleyan Methodist Society. In after years he traced the formative influences of this period to his father and mother, and next to them to his class-leader, through whose prayers 'the way of salvation became clearer and clearer.'

He was soon provided with work for which natural aptitude and special circumstances alike qualified him. A teacher was needed for the infants' class in the Sunday school, and Arthur, boy of fourteen though he was, was placed in sole charge. Order and discipline were instinctive with him, he had vitality enough of his own not to be frayed to rawness by the irrepressibleness of children, and a boy with seven little brothers and sisters was not without experience in the art of 'minding babies.' There for four years, in the square, dingy class-room, with its great windows high above the ground and faced by a brick wall, he swayed the subjects of his little kingdom, teaching, telling stories, drilling them to sing and recite, with a zest that those who saw him later with his own children could well understand.

On leaving Huddersfield College Arthur entered on systematic training for the work of a teacher. In 1880 he was apprenticed as a pupil-teacher in the Spring Grove Board School, to which his old school at Outcote Bank had been transferred. Spring Grove was at that time the largest and best appointed Board School in Huddersfield, a fine stone building on the brink of the Colne valley, looking down upon the clustered mill chimneys and solitary steeples that rise above an undergrowth of factories and houses like poplar stems from an osier bed.

There is no better training in method and discipline and all that makes for success in teaching, than the four years' course of an elementary pupil-teacher. He learns to use his tools before he has lost his youthful suppleness; he knows instantly when a member of his class is 'off side' because he played the game so recently himself, and he feels no compunction in swiftly penalizing the offender. But at Spring Grove Arthur gained something more than technical training; he came under the influence of a cultured and stimulating

mind. The head master was Mr. S. B. Tait, now Inspector of Schools under the Leeds School Board. He soon saw that Arthur Moorhouse was a born teacher, and had, moreover, a soul for good literature. This taste he delighted to encourage. He became a trusted adviser and life-long friend, inspiring in Arthur that whole-hearted loyalty and admiration for a worthy chief which is a young man's noblest ornament. Long after his apprenticeship was over, Arthur looked to Mr. Tait for guidance in his career, especially in all literary efforts, and throughout his ministerial life he gratefully recognized how much he owed to his old friend.

But the humblest official in Spring Grove School, as well as the highest, was to have a share in determining his future. The caretaker was a local preacher in the Methodist New Connexion, and happening to need a supply for a Sunday morning service, he prevailed upon Arthur to take it. Some report of this and subsequent occasions on which he acted as stop-gap for the caretaker in the pulpits of the



New Connexion probably reached the ears of the workers in his own church, and steps were taken to enroll him as a fully accredited Wesleyan local preacher. We find the several stages recorded in the minute-book of the Buxton Road Local Preachers' Meeting. Every such minute-book contains similar notes almost every quarter, sapless and uninteresting enough, apart from the budding hopes and fears of the man in whose career they are the way-marks.

On September 26, 1881, when he was sixteen years old, there occurs the laconic record: 'Agreed that the Superintendent should see Bro. A. Moorhouse to ask him to preach.' Three months afterwards: 'Arthur Moorhouse having been heard by several of the brethren during the quarter, and favourable reports of his preaching being given, it was unanimously agreed that he be placed "On Trial."' His name accordingly appeared on the next circuit plan, and some half-dozen appointments were given him each quarter. After the usual year on trial he was examined in

theology at the Local Preachers' Meeting in December 1882, and unanimously placed 'On full Plan.' Another year passed away, and on Christmas Eve, 1883, there occurs the only other mention of his name: 'Bro. A. Moorhouse having taken a situation at St. Andrews, where no Methodist church exists, it was heartily agreed that his name should continue on the Buxton Road Plan, as he will continue his membership at Buxton Road.'

Though we speak of men and circumstances that shape a career, it is only in the sense that a fruit tree is shaped by its aspect and the hand of the gardener. The direction of its branches, and to some extent the yield of fruit, may be determined from without, but the energy that puts forth branches, and invariably produces grapes in one case and figs in another, belongs to the nature of the tree itself. In his ordination experience Arthur Moorhouse stated that 'he had never thought of anything else but being a preacher. It was the ideal of his boyhood, and it grew with his years.'

But the young tree was now to be trans-

planted into completely different soil, the most congenial possible, as it proved, though at first it might have seemed the least likely to develop a Wesleyan minister. He spent the next four years in Scotland, out of reach of any Methodist service except during his brief holidays. He was in closest comradeship with young men preparing for the ministry of the Scottish churches; social influences of a refined and attractive type showed him how beautiful were the fruits of character produced within the pale of those churches; but he never wavered in his early decision. He kept his name on the roll of the class at Buxton Road, and attended its meetings when his holidays permitted. His own after-estimate of the influence of those four years was that they strengthened his conviction that the Methodist Church was the one for him. He saw its special privileges in clearer relief when he looked at them from outside.

He went to Scotland as secretary to the late Professor Meiklejohn, who held the Chair of Education in the University of St. Andrews. The appointment was made

on the recommendation of Mr. Tait, who writes—

‘ . Professor Meiklejohn told me of a project he had in view of bringing out a series of books, on English Grammar and Literature, History, Geography, &c., for the use of pupil-teachers and students in training-colleges. He asked me if I could recommend to him a young fellow of good education and literary tastes, to act as his secretary and assist him in this work. Without a moment’s hesitation I said he would find in Arthur Moorhouse exactly what he wanted. . . He was certainly the ablest pupil-teacher I ever had; and his quick intelligence, his bright, cheery nature, and the enthusiasm with which he went into anything he took up, made him a general favourite.

‘ Professor Meiklejohn told me that he considered himself fortunate in having secured his services. The relationship between the two was of a most cordial and pleasant character; and Arthur always spoke in most grateful terms of the Professor.’

### III

## ST. ANDREWS

1884-8

THE contrast between Huddersfield and St. Andrews is the completest that could be imagined within the limits of the British Islands. The one a centre of woollen manufacture, with great factories humming with looms, and tall chimneys emitting long streamers of smoke; noisy streets crowded with pushing, practical Yorkshiremen, intent on business, frank in speech and broad in accent: the other a quiet, clean town looking out from low cliffs across an arm of the North Sea; a home of learning and ecclesiastical tradition, with venerable ruins on all points of vantage, and college quadrangles opening off two of its three wide ancient streets; its inhabitants devoted to study or to golf. Each town has its stated hours

when a tide of young life pours through its streets, but the factory girls of Huddersfield clatter home from the mill with their heads wrapped in drab shawls, while the students of St. Andrews pour out of their class-rooms in gowns of scarlet that flood the wintry scene with glowing colour.

The household of which Arthur Moorhouse now formed a part was as congenial as its surroundings. The Professor himself was a breezy personality, impetuous alike in work or in play; fond of young men, and an enthusiast in all he took up. As Professor of Education and a writer of class-books for pupil-teachers, his interests were exactly those with which his assistant was best fitted by previous training to sympathize.

A letter to Mr. Tait, written on returning to St. Andrews after his first holiday, shows that he had completely fallen under the spell of the place.

‘ . . I like to be at home, but I was glad to get back. I like this place better than ever. Every building has its history—every stone its tale to tell. The wide, wind-swept streets, the crumbling ruins, the never-

ceasing roar of the sea, give to the place an air of perpetual sadness, yet, withal, a quiet, sunny sadness—not a heavy, glum, desponding one. You have no sooner left the pier, which is built from the stones of the old Cathedral, than you come to the site of the Culdee Church. Just over the wall are the Cathedral ruins. This Cathedral was consecrated immediately after Bannockburn—Bruce being present—and was enriched by the spoils taken from the English army. How it must have looked when entire—with its shining copper roof—I cannot say, but it could not well look prettier than it does at present. Just outside the Cathedral walls is the spot where Walter Milne, the last Protestant martyr, was burned. On the other side of the street is Queen Mary's House. A stone's throw distant is the Castle.'

It had not occurred to him until he was actually on the ground that he might join the University and proceed to a degree. When he mentioned the matter to Professor Meiklejohn he received every encouragement. It was all the more feasible because the

college session at St. Andrews only extends over the six winter months; the students disperse in April, and do not re-assemble until November; some devoting the long summer to study, others earning the next winter's fees by teaching. During this long vacation he was free for Professor Meiklejohn's work, and by a considerate arrangement of his time in winter, he was able to attend all necessary lectures. He therefore entered the University as a student at the United College for the session 1884-5, and began to work for the degree of M.A. That of B.A. is not bestowed by Scotch Universities.

He was now a youth of nineteen, supple in figure and active in movement. A photograph of the time shows his smooth, beardless face and frank expression—clear, ingenuous eyes, that meet your own with a steady gaze, in which, for all its fearlessness, there lingers a winning boyish modesty.

In the matter of academical costume the chief ambition of every undergraduate is to secure a cap and gown from which the last suspicion of pristine newness has been worn



away. Shabby and tattered specimens have a factitious value akin to that of old oak and china, and it is not unusual to expedite the process of wear and tear and natural decay. Thoroughgoing in this as in everything, Moorhouse had rendered the cardboard in the square of his trencher so pliant by a careful process of massage and exposure to wind and rain, that its four corners drooped round his head like the ears of a spaniel, an object of wonder and sympathy to mothers unfamiliar with undergraduate canons of taste.

He took the examinations for his degree in three instalments, as is usually done, but did not find it all plain sailing. At his first sitting he was 'ploughed' in classics, and wrote—

'I fully expect to pass next time. If I don't, I shall think of "listing" under the name of Aristophanes Mumphes—preserving, as Coleridge did, my own initials, but I shall never know enough Greek to betray myself as he did.'

Six months afterwards he continued—

'I passed this time. It is no wonder I

had not much time for correspondence, for I had to work "like a steam-engine in breeches," as Sydney Smith said. I had the work for the degree, the Professor's work, three hours a day, and the work for my three classes. For the last three weeks I worked about thirteen hours a day. But I have not spent my strength for naught. I am sure you will be pleased to hear that I was first in the English Literature class. Professor Baynes said some very flattering things about my work, and that it would be well worth my while to publish my essay on "Arthur" as it stands. He also spoke very highly of an essay I wrote for him on "Robin Hood." It looks very egotistical to write all this, but I hope you won't look on it in that light.'

One episode of his work for Professor Meiklejohn he always looked back upon with keenest delight. At the general election in July 1886 the Professor was a candidate for Parliament in the Tradeston division of Glasgow, and took his secretary to help in the campaign. From morning to night their powers of work were taxed to the

utmost. A big speech had to be made every evening, and shorter ones to working men during the breakfast and dinner hours; Moorhouse acting as loader for Professor Meiklejohn's guns. Every moment that could be spared from making and delivering speeches was devoted to canvassing, and when the evening meeting was over, Moorhouse went along to the newspaper office to correct proofs of the speech for the paper next morning, getting strange glimpses of the seamy side of Glasgow life as he traversed the streets on his way home long after midnight. They lost the election, but the zest and exhilaration of it, the sense of going full speed ahead with every pound of steam, was always a thrilling memory.

Among his college friends he was chiefly distinguished for his social gifts, and above all for his beautiful tenor voice. The students are not segregated in colleges, but scattered through the town in private lodgings, and share to a large extent in its general social life. And the natives of St. Andrews are distinctly festive and gregarious. Long ago Lord Cockburn

wrote of them, presumably with a twinkle in his judgeship's eye: 'Except those who choose to study, they are all idle; and having all a competency, often humble, no doubt, but sometimes considerable, they are exactly the sort of people who can be gregarious without remorse, and are allured into parties by the necessity of keeping awake.' At these parties Moorhouse was always in demand.

On Sunday his voice rang out rich and clear in the choir of the United College Chapel. An interesting tribute to its quality survives in a characteristic letter from Dr. Boyd (A. K. H. B.), author of *The Recreations of a Country Parson*. His church was St. Mary's, and he was always on the alert for anything to make its services more aesthetic and attractive—

'Although I have not the pleasure of knowing you personally, I have heard you sing and don't feel a stranger. I learn that you are sometimes at St. Mary's at an evening service. It would be extremely kind if—*when you are there, at any rate*—you helped in the choir.

‘I am told you sing at the College Church, and I need not say that I never interfere with people belonging to congregations not my own. But when at St. Mary’s, it is as easy to sing as not, and it would help.’

On less serious occasions his voice set him in the forefront of various ebullitions of youthful exuberance among the students. As in all Universities there are certain ceremonial functions at which the students, massed in the gallery, indulge in audible criticism and uproarious mockery, a licence which by long use and wont has come to be regarded as part of the performance, and is tolerated, sometimes even secretly enjoyed, by the grave actors in the pageant below. Moorhouse was always the precentor on these occasions, and contributed his share to the running fire of comment. One of his happiest sallies could only be fully appreciated by students of logic, sick to death of stumbling into the fallacy known as ‘undistributed middle.’ It was in the days when St. Andrews conferred honorary degrees in medicine. Nine candidates were

standing to take the oath before the presiding dignitary ; in the centre a man of unusual breadth and corpulence, on either hand four lean and undersized individuals. A clear voice rang out from the gallery: ' A case of *undistributed middle!*'

Often when some operatic or other company was giving a performance in the Town Hall a large body of students would attend it, and exercise similar freedom of criticism, applauding vociferously if the performers pleased them, or if they were bored, starting songs of their own, sometimes making it impossible to carry out the programme. Moorhouse, innocent of all theatrical performances, wrote to his father for advice about attending them. With his usual breadth of view and tactfulness, his father replied that he had full confidence in his son's judgement and conscience in such things. Moorhouse accordingly went, and found entertainment without dissipation. Amongst other things, he heard Gilbert and Sullivan's *Mikado*. Both words and music of the opera fastened themselves in his memory. In later years, when a

student for the Wesleyan ministry at Headingley, he was sometimes prevailed upon to give a recital after supper in a crowded study; and with no accessories to help out the illusion but a fan, which he wielded with Japanese dexterity, he would rattle off the various parts to an audience all the more rapturous because unused to theatre-going.

At St. Andrews he was even more noted for his performance of *Box and Cox*. He helped to organize a bazaar in aid of the Students' Union, and took part in five consecutive recitals of this musical farce in one day. As midnight drew near, a search was made for the president—a noble earl—to wind up the proceedings. He was discovered in a back seat listening with unmitigated delight, and when pressed to come for the closing ceremony, replied, 'I must see the end of this show first, at any rate.'

Another hugely popular performance was a travesty of the 'Charge of the Light Brigade,' each verse in a different character. The first was supposed to be recited, with inane interpolations, by Lord Dundreary, the rest in succession by a French comedian,

a German tragedian, a High Church clergyman, a Scotch M.P., a Presbyterian minister, and, on occasion, by various Professors. He grew chary of repeating this in later years, especially after he became a tutor. The last time he gave it was at the end of his first year at Didsbury College. There had been a farewell tea and entertainment for the men about to leave, and he had laughingly withstood all pressure to do 'The Light Brigade.' But when the festivity was over, some half-dozen of the senior men followed him home, and there, in his own house, he gave a strictly private performance, at which the gravest of them laughed with a heartiness worthy of Teufelsdröckh himself.

But with all his high spirits, Moorhouse never kicked over the traces. He was diligent in study and loyal to law and order; fearless, yet respectful of authority. The official reports of his Professors testify without exception that he attended his classes 'with perfect regularity,' and his conduct earns the epithets: 'with perfect propriety,' 'unexceptional,' 'excellent in all



respects.' Tulloch was Principal: liberal in politics, broad in theology, benevolent in disposition, dignified and impressive in appearance; he died during Moorhouse's term of residence. Professor Baynes, familiarly known as 'Tommy,' occupied the Chair of Logic and Literature; a keen, genial spirit, strict in discipline, but wise in understanding young men, and therefore immensely popular. He too died before Moorhouse left St. Andrews. Professor Knight, of Wordsworth fame, held the Chair of Moral Philosophy, and Professor Lewis Campbell that of Greek. All these left their mark on the young student, and were none the less respected and loved because he could on occasion mimic their little tricks of voice and gesture to the life.

During a cold week in January the students in Professor Baynes' class-room had been suffering for some days from a broken window pane. One day the Professor was late, and Moorhouse rose and with mock solemnity harangued his class-mates on the shameful neglect of the authorities in the matter of repairs. Unknown to the class,

‘Tommy’ waited at the door for the speech to finish, then walked in and took up his parable in the same mock-heroic vein, indicted the Commissioners of Woods and Forests, who were responsible for the upkeep of the premises, and ended with the remark, half drowned in a storm of applause, ‘There is hope yet, gentlemen—Parliament meets to-day.’

From the recollections of his college friends a few brief tributes may be culled:—

‘Arthur Moorhouse first attracted me by his demeanour at a College Debating Society. He spoke with a fluent ease which was conspicuous in a gathering of taciturn Scots. He presented his arguments with a winning grace which made the hearer like the speaker, whatever he thought of his cogency. His contemporaries recognized in him a man of quite definite principles. Our feeling was that he would be very loyal to the right if any necessity arose for showing principle; but also that in all innocent merriment he would be a sympathetic contributor. He left St. Andrews carrying with him the kindest esteem of the colleges; and the sad news

of his death has called forth among his old friends the tenderest expressions of regret.'

'In the Liberal and Temperance associations of the University he took a hearty interest, and the example as an abstainer given by one of such conspicuous social qualities was of the greatest influence for good. His high spirits and happy humour were as manifest to his fellow students as his great abilities, and along with all this there was a nobility and gentleness of character which irresistibly recalled his namesake, the "blameless king."'

'At that time he was distinguished by the spirituality of his character. He was very manifestly of a finer nature than the generality of Arts students.'

But the best characterization I have heard of his St. Andrews days was a single sentence from a woman's lips, one who, next to her who became his wife, knew and understood him best of all—'He seemed in those days so *spontaneous*; he just lived and sang like a bird.'

A day spent at St. Andrews, under the guidance of his old friend Professor Kay, yielded little of definite reminiscence, but was steeped in suggestions of a vanished hand and the sound of a voice that is still. We sat at Mrs. Meiklejohn's table, and called at other homes where he was a welcome guest, and the first remark usually was, 'What a beautiful voice he had!' More than one referred to the fact that when Sir Herbert Oakeley, Professor of Music in Edinburgh University, came to conduct the St. Andrews Choral Society on some special occasion, he urged Moorhouse to go to Italy to be trained for operatic singing, and offered to pay his expenses.

We walked through silent college courtyards—the students being mostly away on a short holiday; peeped into empty classrooms, wandered among venerable ruins, chief in interest being those of the old castle on its rocky platform, at the foot of which the waves still make their old music.

Finally, we walked a mile along the sandy beach and home by the noted golf links. A few players were straggling towards the last



## IV

### HEADINGLEY

1888-93

IN the spring of 1888 Moorhouse left St. Andrews, and carried out his life-long intention of becoming a candidate for the Wesleyan ministry. The necessary stages were that he should be successively recommended to Conference by the March Quarterly Meeting of the Buxton Road Circuit, by the May Synod of the Halifax and Bradford District, and by a special committee for the selection of candidates which meets in July. In the course of this drastic sifting he had to preach two trial sermons, submit a third in manuscript, pass a written examination in general literature, and both oral and written examinations in theology. He must also have unimpeachable testimonials as to character and

religious experience, and a medical certificate of health. All these requirements he duly fulfilled, and copies of the various documents and examination marks are now before me.

The literary side gave him no trouble, but in theology his attainments were somewhat slender. In his list of the books he had read there is a long and goodly array of poets, essayists, and philosophers, but the fingers of one hand would suffice to count off the works of theology.

The report on his first trial sermon may be quoted as a terse and discriminating criticism of his preaching ability at this stage. It is all the more interesting because written, on behalf of his two fellow critics, by Dr. Moss, whose colleague Moorhouse afterwards became on the staff of Didsbury College. The text was 1 John i. 9: 'If we confess our sins,' &c.—

'The sermon was a thoughtful and interesting exposition of the subject of the verse. It lacked in some degree directness of aim, and its theology was halting; but its illustrations were apt, its spirit good, and its intellectual qualities high.

‘ The preacher’s manner was both reverent and forcible, and we are of opinion that with practice and careful study he will make a preacher of considerable ability.’

The manuscript sermon was more severely handled. The marginal comments of the examiners were: *style—gushing ; treatment—meagre ; theology—scanty ; could evidently do better*. Seventeen years later, when he became a member of the July committee, and sat in judgement on a younger generation of candidates, he looked up his own record in the bulky minute-book, and laughed heartily as he read for the first time the scathing criticisms he had unconsciously survived.

The weakness of one sermon did not counteract the high average of his other marks and qualifications, and he was duly accepted by Conference and sent to Headingley College for a course of theological training.

The college stands in its own grounds on the highest point of Leeds ; its cupola, irreverently known as the *pepper-pot*, commands a view—when smoke permits—over



the whole of the town. A broad straight drive leads from the entrance gate to the front, flanked on the right by a well-kept sloping bank of dwarf laurels. Its terrace is brightened by beds of rhododendron, and in summer gusts of wallflower fragrance are wafted in through wide open windows. Behind are tennis lawns and a breezy cricket field; and indoors and out an air of perpetual youth—strong, confident, earnest, and laughter-loving.

It was when acting as the junior member of the college staff that I first met Arthur Moorhouse. The date was September 7, 1888, the beginning of my fifth year of residence. The corridors were echoing with cheery voices; old friends greeting each other after the vacation; trunks being carried or trundled along to the studies of their owners; new arrivals being pounced upon and welcomed by second and third year's men on the lookout for them. Each of these new-comers was brought or directed to the assistant tutor's study, that he too might give a hand-shake and a word of greeting. Possibly, over and above the

glow of entertaining strangers, there was something secretly flattering to the self-complacency of an old resident in the task of putting at their ease these diffident, deferential, unsophisticated freshmen, and in their obvious gratitude for the kindly reception they found awaiting them. By and by a knock came to the door—a light tap, rather—like that of a familiar who has the right of entry, not at all the freshman's deliberate front-door knock. In response to my 'Come in!' there entered promptly an alert, self-possessed, most unclerical figure, and stood before me. 'My name's Moorhouse,' he said. He seemed to take my measure with his keen blue eyes, glanced swiftly round the room, and waited for me to speak. It was the assistant tutor's turn to feel unsophisticated now. His attitude was that of self-reliance and assurance, but as one discovered later, it was assurance of the defensive, not the self-satisfied, aggressive type. The interview was short, and my reflection as the door closed behind him was, 'I shall not have much in common with you, my friend; there are no joints in your armour.'

That feeling lasted for some weeks, perhaps months. I believe I half suspected him of being a somewhat godless youth—doubted, in fact, whether he had the root of the matter in him. He had not the Methodist air, and was impatient of Methodist forms of speech. I have since heard him say that the word ‘Brethren,’ as used by tea-table orators, stuck in his throat. It seemed to him to savour of religious cant, though as free from it in reality as when used by a judge or a freemason. There was no trace on the surface of that chastened spirit and inner seriousness which should be the basis of ministerial character.

Among the influences that contributed to a truer understanding of the real man were, no doubt, the tone of his prayers—always devout and spiritual—whenever it came to his turn to lead our morning and evening devotions; and the unaffected sincerity and freshness of his remarks in the Governor’s class-meeting. Eventually, we drifted into one of those deep, intimate talks in which a man’s very heart is revealed. And that revelation brought the whole of his outer

and inner life into focus and perspective, as when the stereoscope throws two images into a single solid reality. It showed a character entirely true to itself in every manifestation, essentially modest, earnest, sane, full of sympathy, unswervingly loyal to life's noblest ideals.

The self-assurance of his manner was the defensive armour of a heart peculiarly sensitive to ridicule and coldness. Few men combined in a higher degree extreme sensitiveness with the pluck and resolution not to betray it. His outworks were strong enough ; you might hammer at them as long as you pleased without hurting him. Playful banter, frank and friendly criticism, fair and open hostility, to all these he showed a fearless front, and delighted in the clash of arms, but he shrank from placing his inner life at the mercy of strangers.

Shortly after coming he wrote to Mr. Tait—

‘ Here we have a great many common aims and common sympathies which one cannot find in a Scottish University. There is no *place* which can compare with

St. Andrews, but I think I like the life here better. There is a very pleasant break of the monotony of ordinary college life at the week ends. We preach at different places nearly every Sunday. For instance, last Sunday I was preaching at Easingwold, about thirteen miles north of York; next Sunday I am at Pontefract. Coming from Easingwold to York, I met with a Roman Catholic priest—a very nice young fellow with rather radical views—and he showed me all round the R.C. Church near the Minster, and explained about the confessionals and shrines and pictures, &c. It is a beautiful little church inside. I wish some of our Wesleyan chapels were half so beautiful.'

Before the end of his first year he and I were fast friends, and the comradeship was strengthened by his appointment to the office of sub-tutor during his second year. It is a position analogous to that of student-teacher in a school. The man who holds it teaches classes in several subjects, and is brought into close relations with the tutorial staff, but he still retains his status as a

student, and is dependent on the good-will and confidence of his fellows for all comfort and success in his work.

The door of his study was now opposite mine; a single stride took him across the corridor, and his light rapid knock was always a welcome sound to the occupant of No. 1. He was keen and enthusiastic in his own work, and never begrudged any labour that would lighten the burden of mine. He 'frivolled' as heartily as he worked. Part of the furniture of the assistant tutor's study was a morocco-covered arm-chair, and many a spare five minutes have we spent in trying who could toss pennies most adroitly into the chink between the seat and back.

His morning hours were spent partly in teaching, partly in attending classes in theology and biblical subjects. Evenings were devoted to preparation for next day's work; afternoons were free for exercise and recreation. Moorhouse threw himself into games as into every other phase of college life.

Often we walked down to Leeds together

to make some little purchase. Less frequently we turned our faces to the country, and trudged to Seven Arches or Adel Church, by paths along a stream which could not be called pellucid, but where none the less

The wild marsh-marigold shone like fire in swamps and hollows gray,

and the birch woods waved the freshest of green tresses in spring.

His keenness of observation, especially when we walked townwards, was a continual source of wonder and envy to his country-bred companion. Nothing escaped him; a peculiar gait, an oddity of dress, a prominent feature on a face, at once caught his eye, and the inferences he would draw as to a man's profession from his clothes and manner savoured of the acuteness of Sherlock Holmes.

Many a good talk we had during those afternoon walks, and many another after supper, when he would drop in and sit chatting by the fire long past the hour when the gas was turned off at the meter, and we had to grope our way arm-in-arm along the

corridor and up the broad stone stairs to bed. Sometimes he was in a frolicsome mood, bubbling over with vitality. Without warning, his hand would come bang on one's knee, with a hearty 'Ha! ha! ha! Barney,' and then a tussle would ensue, in which his superior weight and muscle usually laid his senior colleague prone on the floor.

Many of those after-supper hours were devoted to a thorough study of Tennyson's *In Memoriam*. He was steeped in the *Idylls of the King*; with me, *In Memoriam* had held the first place. We combined our stores, wrestling with difficulties, bringing parallel passages to elucidate them, feeling our way to the facts underlying the poem, revelling in the music of it, and finding a charm in exploring a field then almost untrodden by commentators that can never be gained from expositions ready to hand.

Few influences of college life contribute more to readiness in public speaking than the almost daily debates at the tea-table. The customary absence of the Governor from that meal made it a useful safety-valve for the harmless blowing-off of such steam as is



generated among a body of young men all living together. The monitor for the week was put in the chair, the rules of debate were rigidly observed, and eloquence on all manner of topics was poured forth. Sometimes hot debate on matters belonging to the games fund or reading-room; sometimes a grudge against an unpopular pudding, or a vote of censure on a practical joker; often pure fooling — points of order to badger an unsophisticated chairman, or congratulations on a birthday or an engagement. And all this amid shouts of ‘Hear! hear!’ ‘No! no!’ passing to and fro of cups of tea, thumpings on the table till the crockery rang again. There is no better practice in the art of thinking on one’s feet in spite of interruption, and in the management of business meetings. Moorhouse had been a debater at St. Andrews, and was often on his feet at the Headingley tea-table.

In November of his second year he sat for the first part of his B.D. at St. Andrews, staying at the house of Professor Meiklejohn, and the earliest letter I have from him was written during that visit. After an account

of the journey up, and of the examination itself, he continues—

‘ St. Andrews was looking splendid to-day. There was a beautiful sunset, just gaudy, and to-night, as I had a short walk on the sands before coming in, the whole scene flooded with moonlight, it felt like old times. Barnes! I once wrote a poem. If you had been with me to-night you would have done it yourself. It was about St. Andrews—I don’t remember the first part, but here are the last three verses, *entre nous* !—

And yet I do not greatly care  
 Though leaves be dead and storms abide,  
 To me the place is thrice as fair  
 In winter as in summer-tide.

For then true-hearted friends return  
 Who with me wear the scarlet gown,  
 Whose hearts within them ever burn  
 With love toward the little town.

“ St. Andrews by the Northern Sea,”  
 May my right hand in death grow cold  
 When I forget that ’twas in thee  
 Life’s sands were shaken into gold.’

In June 1890 we separated for the long vacation, aware that our happy association at Headingley was ended, and the ensuing

Conference appointed him to the vacant post of assistant tutor.

He wrote me copious letters at somewhat distant intervals, chiefly about his work and college affairs, in most racy, unconventional style, the sentences seeming to be flirled from his pen without effort. Owing to the ephemeral nature of their topics and the free use of coterie speech, they are unsuitable as a whole for publication, but a specimen or two of their spontaneity may be quoted—

‘We have a festive elocutionist, the usual sort: long curly locks, bald toward the forehead, flashing eyes, well-cut nose, tight-fitting boots, delicate hands, deep voice, sort of semi-tragical kind of nineteenth-century Shakespearean look about him.

‘He comes every Monday evening—bless him!—and takes the men in two classes of one hour each. He can read, though! He can elocute! . . . So sermonizing is the bugbear of your life at present, is it? Is it *ideas* you want? Then read a book which I have just finished called *Little Women*, by Louisa M. Alcott. There is one character as like Miss —— as one cabbage is like

another—not that there is anything suggestive of cabbage about Miss —. . . I haven't enjoyed a book more for a very long time.

'I wish you were here. I *do* want to tease somebody. I think I'll go and see Mrs. B——! . . .

'You will be edified to hear that I get up at 6.15 these days. I have done it all this term. . . I'm afraid my good resolutions will fade away when the dark cold mornings come along, but I have managed so far. I am nearly always in bed when the clock strikes eleven—nobody wastes my time as I wasted yours. I haven't much to waste. The men understand that I am glad to see anybody after supper, but from six to nine I get for Hebrew and theology.

'I *would* like to slate you about the itinerancy question.<sup>1</sup> "Those who have a special affinity for longer pastorates go to Congregationalism": that is, let us send many of our best men away because we will not change a detail of our polity which is a mere

<sup>1</sup> I had argued against any extension of the three years' system.—J. A. B.

accident, and not essential. Nobody wants to do away with the principle of itinerancy, nor to have some pastorates of indefinite length, as among the New Connexion folk. Why should we *not* adopt the advantages of another church in part, as well as stick to our own? It *does* very well for the average minister and the average people, and you put a premium on mediocrity, and keep down your miserable average. I believe our system is the best in the world for lazy and second-rate men. That is how I feel at present.'

To a fellow Yorkshireman who had been with him at St. Andrews he wrote—

'First let me congratulate you about the little volumes in pretty bindings. You were always a modest fellow—except on the question of cornet solos. I suppose you mean by that curious bit of information that you have passed your law exams. with great éclat, and come out top of the list or thereabouts, and the neat bindings are the prizes which are the result of your toil. You lucky dog!

'I like to hear of you lecturing on

"Goldsmith." I wish I could have heard it. The other Sunday I had to go to a P.S.A., and I had an idea that I could make *In Memoriam* interesting to anybody, so I took that for a subject. It was a most miserable failure. Most of my audience were gardeners and small farmers, and there wasn't a single idea they could hang on to. I was very sorry for them. It was painful to see how they endured it. Goldsmith would have "gone" much better. It does rouse a spark of interest in any audience when you tell them about a fellow who was ordained in yellow plush breeches. I hope to get a chance to redeem my character. I think I shall read Tennyson's *Northern Cobbler* next time, and yarn about that.

'You would scarcely know me now. I have become a quiet, sedate, ordinary parson. You see skittishness is very "catching," and our men are quite skittish enough. They don't need any encouragement. One of them tumbled off the roof last week and nearly broke his neck. . . . I am needing a holiday. The last term was seventeen weeks long, and I was working without a

break seven days a week. You seem to imagine that parsons have nothing to do. I wish you could take a turn. There is this about their work. It is pretty much what they like to make it, and one could do it passably and have an easy time, but some of us have a conscience. I'll have a good many things to regret at the last day, but I shall never reproach myself with idleness—unless I alter strangely.

‘When are you coming to Leeds again? Do your cases come on at the Leeds assizes? I go down sometimes to get a few tips about public speaking, and I can learn more from the barristers than from any other set of men. There was a breach of promise case on one day, and I went down. The court was crowded. We waited two hours listening to a tedious case of window fittings and breach of contract. Then the court adjourned till next day.’

To these momentary glimpses into Moorhouse's life at Headingley may be added the reminiscences of some of his closest friends. Strange, however, it is to reflect how few definite incidents can be recalled of an

intercourse so quick with interest, how little of the influence of his strong and genial personality was due to

Things done, that took the eye and had the price ;  
and how much to his mere presence, the joyous communication of his own clear-bubbling vitality—

Thoughts hardly to be packed  
Into a narrow act,  
Fancies that broke through language and escaped.

Professor Findlay's account of his first meeting with him has already been quoted (Introduction, p. 5). He continues—

‘Mr. Moorhouse had all but completed his course in Arts at St. Andrews when he presented himself a candidate for the ministry, and he took his Master's degree shortly after entering at Headingley College. That being done, he threw himself with all his might into his new career. He was both a rapid and an accurate worker. He showed at once the intelligent grasp and sure touch which mark the trained mind, whatever the field of knowledge to which it is applied. He had besides, in those early days, what is sometimes wanting in men of greater acquirements,



a literary instinct and gift of expression, and a certain finish about the form of all his work, which distinguish culture from mere learning and mental furniture. At St. Andrews Mr. Moorhouse had made his mark especially in English literature. He had a considerable mastery of the history and criticism of English poetry, beside his familiarity with the actual writings. We had nothing to teach him in this direction, and little or nothing in respect of style and mode of address. His brightness and good humour and manly ease, united with his perfect clearness and excellent diction, and his skill in the handling and illustration of his theme, made him a winning student-preacher; while gravity and spiritual feeling were never wanting in him, and the strong desire and effort to bring men to God.

‘Coming to Headingley, Mr. Moorhouse’s mind took a new stamp. His first love for English letters was more than rivalled by his devotion to the literature of Scripture. He entered the Theological Institution as one could wish more of our candidates were able to do, trained and apt in general

learning, and ripe for theological discipline. I do not remember any student who more quickly and with greater pleasure mastered the elements of Hebrew, or more easily took the lead in his Greek Testament classes. Such a scholar provides a stimulus to his tutors, and sets a standard of work and style to his comrades both of which are of great value in college classes. At the same time Mr. Moorhouse began to think more deeply about religious questions on their intellectual side, and to realize the bearing of Christian doctrine upon life and literature.

‘When after his two years of studentship the assistant tutor’s post at Headingley fell vacant, there could be no doubt as to the right successor. Mr. Moorhouse’s personal qualities and force of character, no less than his scholarship, commended him for an office which is amongst the most difficult and delicate, as well as responsible, that a young minister can occupy. He lived in the affection and confidence and the respectful admiration of those scarcely younger than himself, whom he now had to teach. Others nearer to our friend in age may speak more

intimately than I can do of his charming comradeship. To myself as a junior colleague and assistant he was the perfection of kindness and thoughtfulness. I leaned much upon his judgement both in regard to the curriculum of our department and in regard to the estimate I formed of individual students and their work. At that period (from the years twenty-five to twenty-eight of his age) his mind was growing fast, and he formed clear and strong opinions about men and things, which he could always put in a lucid and convincing way. With all his freshness of view and eagerness of temper, he had much shrewdness and solid sense; there was in his mind a conservative vein and a love of order which are excellent things in a young tutor.

‘My intercourse with him after he left Headingley for circuit work was rare. But for some months I had in the press a small volume on the *Books of the Prophets*, in which Mr. Moorhouse had taken a warm interest; he read the proofs carefully throughout, and gave me numerous suggestions both as to the matter and form of the book, which in most instances I was

glad to adopt. He rendered me similar service in the preparation of the *Fernley Lecture* of 1894. I counted upon it that, when the opportunity came, he would do work of his own in the same fields, of a more substantial character.

‘When he came to Harrogate in 1897, it was a great pleasure to have Mr. Moorhouse once more within reach. He had ripened much in the four years’ interval, and was full of cares for the Church of God. There was, perhaps, less of the old buoyancy, more weight and staidness of manner, and a deeper undertone in his talk. He showed signs, too, at that period of physical strain which we had not observed in him before. In his preaching and public style there was the same good taste and choiceness of language and genial bearing, with more chastened and sober feeling; he had gained much in inward experience and in sympathy with common life and need. His sense of the difficulties of religious thought and of the burdening conditions of church work in our day was acute, and laid upon his ministry its peculiar

cross. A glance into the Harrogate home was enough to show that my friend's marriage had been a most happy union, and that in this part of human felicity he was blessed to his heart's content. For a mind so gifted and schooled, a "spirit touched to" such "fine issues" and then arrested in the full tide of its activities, there is service to be rendered somewhere in the "house of many mansions," the sight of which, if it could be afforded us, would take away all the sense of frustration and untimeliness attaching to his removal in our earthly estimate. This at least we know, that such life-labour as that we are recalling "is not in vain in the Lord." Our brother was too humbly sensible of God's infinite grace to him in Christ to cherish greatly thoughts of future reward; but if there were anything he would have asked for in this way—next to the sight of our Saviour's face—I think his ardent, unspent nature would have chosen the boon expressed in the words of his own Tennyson—

Give me the wages of *going on*, and not to die !  
Give me the glory of *going on*, and still to be !

“Our God is not,” said Jesus, “a God of the dead, but of the living; for they all live unto Him.”’

The Rev. H. C. Floyd writes—

‘The first night I was in college I saw him, and I was at once struck by his frank, gay eagerness of spirit. There was a high power of virility about him—a certain sureness and fitness—of both body and spirit—something of a maiden purity along with a man’s strength. He was, of course, an enthusiast—a sane enthusiast in every good thing, from football and rackets upwards through psychology to the saving of souls.

‘This wide range of his powers and sympathies was specially characteristic. He was a remarkably good mixture. He loved to work and to play, to “frivol” (to use a favourite word of his) and to pray; his whole strength of brain and heart was in his laughter, while when occasion arose all his strength came forth in keen scorn of meanness, and anger at injustice or ill-naturedness. He was equally at home holding a private concert after supper in

one of our dens, or again in the ethics class; or once more pleading the cause of Foreign Missions, or the higher Evangelism; while his extra and voluntary early morning class for the study of *In Memoriam* comes back to the heart of many a man now, surely, with its sense of the seriousness of the best literature and with a feeling for the dewy freshness which grace and truth impart.

‘We cannot write an “In Memoriam” of him, but those who gave him and received from him manly respect and affection cannot fail to turn their memories of him into a sacrament of vows and thanksgivings.’

Another old Headingley student, the Rev. A. Rudman, also testifies to the inspiration of Moorhouse’s classes in English literature—

‘I owe it to him that a vague love of literature—of the precious things of our own tongue—became a steady and ordered joy of my life. He gave my crude taste and longing to *know* direction and wise stimulus, and though I don’t forget a debt in other classes, it was in the English class

I learned the most precious lessons of my Headingley days. . He has left a bigger gap in my life than any death since my mother's, when he wrote me the letter now before me.'



## V

### CIRCUIT WORK

1893-1903

I N June 1893 Mr. Moorhouse completed his term of three years at Headingley, and entered on the work of a circuit minister in the following September. At the Conference which intervened he was ordained, and the ceremony made a profound and lasting impression upon him. He felt it to be the solemn imposition of grave and life-long responsibilities. I am permitted to use the following extracts from his Conference letters to one who was no less deeply interested in his future than himself.

CARDIFF CONFERENCE,  
*July 1893.*

‘I am rather tired to-night. It is very exciting work, and how I would like to have a turn in all the sparring that goes on.

Hugh Price Hughes is a splendid fellow in debate. It would have done you good to hear him to-day. . . I went out to Penarth—a suburb on the Severn four miles from here—to the “public examination of candidates for ordination.” We were divided into four batches of sixteen each. It is not an examination in scriptural or theological knowledge or orthodoxy of belief, but a solemn avowal before the people that you believe yourself to be converted and called by God to the ministry. I think it is only right that some such declaration should be required of us. Every one of us without exception traced the main cause of his conversion to his home life, and Mr. M'Cullagh made that the text of a most powerful address to the parents present. They *must* have been impressed. It would do more than twenty sermons to foster and increase a desire for religion in the home. . . . We were all “received into full connexion” on Friday afternoon—fifty-eight of us. There was a grand debate that afternoon, and Hughes made one of the best speeches I ever heard from any man on

any subject. For three-quarters of an hour he kept it up, taking splendid advantage of every interruption. . I sent you a paper to-day. I am vexed about the reports of our meeting at Penarth, for though I think it perfectly right that every candidate for ordination should give an account—a public account—of his conversion and call to preach, I *loathe* to see it in print. It is one thing to speak there and then to living people, and another thing to see a more or less accurate account of it for everybody to see. However, we shall survive that. .

This has been a blessed and memorable day with me. I feel as if a great benediction rested on me to-night. Most of all I thought of your prayers. It was fine to feel *you* so near in that the most solemn event of all my life. . I went down at half-past nine and found the chapel crowded. Many had been there since eight o'clock. At ten the President entered the pulpit and gave out a hymn. How they sang! We all sat in pews at the front, and after a very impressive service we went up in batches of five and knelt at the communion rail, and

the President, ex-President, the President of the Irish Conference, and the Secretary, put their hands on our heads one after another, while the President read the form of ordination from the service-book; and then he gave us a Bible each, and said, "Take thou authority to preach the Word of God and to administer the holy sacraments in the congregation." I was trembling all over. Anything more solemn and impressive I never saw before. Then followed other prayers, and the Lord's Supper was given to each of us; and at 11.35 Dr. Rigg began his "Charge." He spoke an hour and a quarter. . . . I never felt such a great peace as I do to-night. If I should forget this day, how it will rise up to shame me in the great day of the Lord! Will you not pray for me that I may above all things be a faithful and diligent pastor, and that I may have a purer heart? May the good God guard you and make us each ready for all His perfect will!'

On the first Sunday in September he entered on his work as third minister in

the Lincoln (High Street) Circuit. After one year there he left to obtain a house, and spent the full term of three years in each of the following circuits: Sydenham, Harrogate, and Eccles.

After the initial discovery that he was a man of deeper susceptibilities and greater worth than hasty first impressions led one to suppose, no subsequent development of his character surprised me more than his efficiency as a pastor. A teacher he was in every bone and fibre of him, and one expected him to attain distinction—as he did—in the sphere of expository preaching, and in thoroughness of organization and business management. But I never dreamed he would have patience for all the little attentions that are necessary to conciliate and keep sweet the various workers and members in the pastorate of a voluntary church, especially one with a strong democratic element like Methodism. In pastoral visitation, for instance, he could not endure the suspicion of talking goody-goody, and yet he was equally intolerant of mere conventional small-talk. He felt a great

craving to be natural. One of his sermons expresses it exactly: 'We are hampered and restrained by all these conventionalities and trivialities, and in our higher moments we hate ourselves for wasting our breath in repeating all those little nothings which habit and custom and fashion expect us to say. Then once more the desire to be true, sincere, straight, forces itself upon us.' But in visiting a pastorate of several hundred members, many of whom are not—and under the Methodist system cannot be—intimately known to the pastor, it is often not possible to strike on vital topics.

Then, too, he was never a man to 'suffer fools gladly,' and even if one does not estimate the individuals of that genus as liberally as Carlyle, there are still specimens to be found in most Methodist — and other—churches.

He was abrupt and direct in speech, a feature that endears a man to college friends, but is apt to be misunderstood by the world at large. He was free from the vice of 'sloppy geniality,' that besetting sin of some ministers, and went rather to the other

extreme of brusqueness. In addressing a stranger, or making a purchase from a shopman, his speech was apt to be 'incisive, curt, crepitant'; and when introduced to a person who did not interest him, he was slow to make conversation. He had no patience to wriggle his meaning into gloves. Alike in sparring or in hand-grasp, you touched his naked fist. If a student were lazy, or a circuit official unreasonable, he told him so on the spot, without animus and without rasping sarcasm, but unsparingly, and, if need be, with warmth of indignation. This sometimes made trouble, especially with those who did not know how entirely free he was from personal rancour. He often recalled the words of his friend, the wife of the Governor at Headingley, when he bade her good-bye. 'Do not be surprised,' she said, 'if people do not at once understand you; you will always be better liked in your third year than your first.' It was not lack of tact or of sympathy; in the presence of sorrow few men knew better when to speak and when to be silent; it was simple straightforwardness. He felt no resentment

at plain dealing with himself—courted it, in fact, and invited his friends to smite and spare not—and he credited others too readily with the same disposition.

Sometimes, in trifling matters where no censure whatever was intended, he expressed his opinion with frank simplicity, and suddenly awoke in half-comic dismay to the suspicion that he had said too much.

But in assuming that his strength would not show itself in pastoral work one had overlooked certain special aptitudes.

To begin with, he had a splendid memory for faces and people. He was interested in them, that was the secret of it, even in the mere externals of dress and feature. When he had once shaken hands with a man he knew him again, and could address him by name, wherever he met him. He recognized the members of his congregation from the pulpit; observed who was absent and discovered the reason of it; noticed new-comers, and made sure they were welcomed. He not only saw who was present, but knew all that went on. If a boy in the gallery began to exhibit to his neighbour the contents of



his pocket, he found the preacher's eye upon him instantly; if two members of the choir indulged in a whispered conversation, a swift turn of the head, and perhaps an ominous pause, warned them that they were the objects of attention. His quick observation and pedagogic training made him sensitive to the least distraction, and his impatience of disorder brought him to a full stop until the cause was removed.

Then, again, he was methodical. Accepting it as a duty that a pastor should visit his flock, he set about it in a thoroughly systematic way. He always tried to get once round during his first quarter, bringing his visiting-list up to date. After leaving a house he entered up the name of every child and made a note of any special matter of interest. On his next visit he surprised the mother by inquiring after the children in turn, and showed that he remembered and felt interested in the work in which each of them was engaged, whether at school or in business. The servant got a word of recognition at the door, and a new face there did not escape his notice.

In Harrogate especially I was struck with his alertness as a pastor, for there the members of his own church formed a larger and more permanent element of the general population than in the suburbs of London, amid vast crowds and incessant migration. There was no getting along in his company without continual interruption. Here a costermonger, wheeling his barrow, would raise his cap, and Mr. Moorhouse would step off the causeway to exchange a few words with him; then two or three school-girls would smile coyly as they drew near, and their minister had the Christian name of each on his tongue, and a word of playful greeting; the next sudden halt might be to mention a matter of business to an office-bearer, or to inquire about a sick wife or child. And it all mattered to him; it was not perfunctory or conventional. He was troubled with their troubles, and would put himself to inconvenience to help.

In the Eccles Circuit he went out after supper one evening to offer to sit up with a member of his congregation whom he had

been visiting daily for some time, whose wife and daughter were almost worn out with watching. They would not take advantage of his offer, but they said the sick man had been longing and praying for him all day, as if he could not take leave of life without seeing him once again. And long before morning death's gentle presence released them from their vigil.

His social gifts stood him in good stead. His performances as a soloist and comic reciter have already been referred to, but he was also an excellent story-teller. Many of his stories had a Scotch origin, and he told them with so perfect an accent that it required an effort to realize that he was not a Scotsman by birth. In almost every letter, and every time we met, he would retail the latest joke about some college friend or well-known Methodist worthy, with the keenest enjoyment of the humour of it. But with all his love of a good story he was an absolute non-conductor to any of doubtful complexion. It was not that he kept himself pure by conscious and painful effort ;

the whole tone of his mind was too sound and wholesome to afford a moment's harbourage to germs of corruption.

From Lincoln he wrote—

‘As for circuit work, I like it “fine.” I have no hankering after the flesh-pots of Headingley. This is an ideal circuit in most respects—plenty of country work, a magnificent town chapel, full to the doors every Sunday night, summer and winter, about 50 per cent. men—skilled artisans. . . A congregation like ours makes a man do his level best. I know that the sermons are discussed and very intelligently criticized in the workshops here on Monday mornings. You see the men in the wood-works and the brass foundries can work and talk, and they do both uncommonly well. My best and most abiding joy has been in visiting. I have been kept hard at it lately—so much sickness about. It was a great cross at first. I couldn't get over my aversion to talking “goody.” But I seldom talk much. I pray with them, and I am sometimes astonished myself at the way in which

I am helped. On Friday nights I have a preacher's class. I get about fourteen young locals every Friday evening at seven. We do Findlay's *Epistles of Paul* forty minutes, and homiletics twenty minutes. They do an outline most weeks. They have worked *splendidly*. It has been the most satisfactory bit of work I have done. Through the winter I attended every meeting except two of the "Mutual." We got a hundred people sometimes, and the papers were very good. I took a lantern round the villages for the missionary meetings. But preaching has been a new thing. I am only just now learning how to preach. It is *grand*! I have got the best super. in the three kingdoms. He lets me have as much of my own way as I like, and works as hard at my schemes as if he had proposed them. He is a brick. . . I am reading hard at John Wesley's *Journals*, and my regard for John goes up every day.'

In August 1894 Mr. Moorhouse was married to Miss Jessie Howat, of Stirling. He had met her at St. Andrews when she

was visiting there during his first year of residence, being still in her early teens. He also made the acquaintance of her brothers, and became a frequent and welcome guest at their home. After his removal to Headingley the friendship ripened into an engagement. Of all that this meant to him, then and afterwards, it is the more impossible to speak because it meant so much. To him love was the most sacred element in human life, a testimony to all that is noblest in man, filling him with a sense of awe and worship. An old friend writes: 'He made it a rule never to chaff men over engagements. To him it was too solemn a matter, and his intense admiration for the ideal in womanhood never allowed him to speak slightly of women, or to tolerate any approach to vulgarity in others. His own devotion when engaged was very beautiful.'

Some three months after his marriage I visited him in his new home at Forest Hill in the Sydenham Circuit. It was easy to see that his life was full of deep

contentment and sparkling with gladness. In his attitude to his wife there was a beautiful mingling of playful teasing with manly tenderness and chivalry. On many subsequent occasions I spent a few days at his house, usually between Christmas and the New Year. Then there were brisk morning walks, long talks about books, and currents of thought, and Methodist affairs; after every meal a frolic with the children, when he would gallop round the room with them, tossing them in the air, letting them scramble over him and turn somersaults like little acrobats, for they inherited his irrepressible energy. The evening would be occupied in table games or in reading aloud some light literature — Barrie's *Sentimental Tommy* and Kipling's *Just-so Stories* are some I remember. And mingling with it all, the very spice and savour of it, was the same sweet freshness of a life-long courtship — a perfect mutual understanding that was never clouded.

Sometimes he in turn was my guest. Very vividly do I recall a holiday he and

his wife spent with me at Cambridge. He brought an eye for all he saw. The mellow brooding charm of silent college courts—it was the long vacation—and summer groves and lawns appealed to him, and he caught the full fragrance of all their literary associations. With Milton we peered into the sluggish depths of ‘hoary Camus, foot-ing slow’; with Wordsworth we crossed the courts and bridge of St. John’s and gazed up at the statue of Newton in the chapel of Trinity; oftenest of all with Tennyson and Arthur Hallam ‘up that long walk of limes we passed’ or sat in the sunny Backs and listened to

The moan of doves in immemorial elms,  
The murmur of innumerable bees.

We cycled to Bury St. Edmunds to see an old college friend, and as we rode leisurely homeward we talked of faith in the future life, and the difficulty of maintaining it in face of modern science, especially as the acceptance of critical results had weakened the final appeal to the *ipse dixit* of Scripture. We could no longer place the matter beyond dispute, as our Methodist forefathers had done,



by a mere array of proof-texts. Moorhouse's attitude was characteristic. 'I know that here and now I have an inner life of fellowship with Christ. That life carries in itself a pledge—an intuition—of immortality. It belongs to a sphere that death cannot enter.' So in other great fundamentals of Christian belief, his final appeal was to experience—his own experience as attested and completed by that of believers generally.

The critics might prove this incident unhistoric or that Epistle unauthentic, but the fact of Christ was to him verifiable in experience, a living impulse and personal source of energy. Not that he would have admitted that criticism had ever touched, or could touch, the main outlines of the life of Christ. But even there too, though he knew the links in the chain of evidence, and had confidence in their validity, the foundations of his belief were laid on intuition and experience. The picture of Jesus of Nazareth in the Gospels could only have been drawn from life. Its reality was self-evident. It transcended invention and defied explanation. The

portrait in the Gospels was verified by its reflection in the human soul—

As the image in the glass  
Answers the beholder's face.

He felt himself sustained, quickened, purified by an energy that he could only account for as the continuance of that ideal life at the centre of his being—‘Christ in him,’ in Paul’s phrase.

The intellectual outworks of his mind were open to doubt, but the central citadel was never threatened. He knew nothing of those temperamental doubts that draw ‘down with the blood, till all the heart is cold with formless fear.’ Hence he welcomed the critical spirit, since it could only clear away the dead bark and give the life within room to expand. To talk with doubters or to read unorthodox books only gave freshness to his own convictions instead of making him tremble for the ark of God.

The next letter was written to a young relative who had been passing through a phase of theological unsettlement:—

‘I am very glad for your sake that you

have come to a better and more restful state of mind. I cannot agree with your conclusions altogether, though that is not of any consequence. Do not be in a hurry for finality. You will probably change your views twenty times in as many years. "A man's religion is that which satisfies his highest longings for true life, for holiness, &c."—all that is true, but of course the only hope of satisfaction is in carrying that idea through the details of every day's life. I have no fear for a man's ultimate creed if he will live out the best he knows.

'But it is another matter when you say, "No matter what a man's creed." I don't see how an enlightened man *can* be a Unitarian or a Roman Catholic. I do not see how any man—learned or ignorant—can read the four Gospels with an unprejudiced mind and believe that Christ was a man and nothing more. Neither can I see how a Roman Catholic can do the same thing, and yet offer his worship through Mary and the saints, and confess his sins to a priest. I cannot think that any loyal Christian man can permanently remain indifferent to such

errors. And I do not see the force of your remarks about the elder brother. It is ridiculous that any man should say he feels his need of a Saviour if he does not. It is equally ridiculous to try and "work up" such a feeling. To any man loyal to Christ and duty, it will come sooner or later. No books can bring it about, no theologies, nothing but the experience of life, nothing but actual contact with God. A man will surely believe that Christ is a revelation of God, but I cannot conceive it possible for a right-minded man to be permanently oblivious to his need of a Saviour. A "sense of sin"—I mean an adequate sense of the sinfulness of sin—does not come to the majority of people till long after conversion.'

From Harrogate he wrote—

' . . . In one way or another I have been working very hard. Last Sunday was quite a typical day. I preached three times, gave the Sacrament twice, visited two sick people. I have three services every Sunday, and, barring Saturdays, I have only five nights without one or more meetings between August and January. Then again, this being my last

year, I have to make one or more new sermons every week.

‘The extraordinary thing is that one can work like a Trojan here and never feel it. Oh what a delightful (!!) change Manchester will be! Blow the three years’ system! And the folks here are just the embodiment of kindness. Of course there are a few exceptions, but most of the folk are very good and very appreciative. There is plenty to show for the work, too. The congregations have increased fourfold. The membership in March since 1894 has gone up from 38 to 185. . The *Daily Mail* came in just here, and I indulged in my little daily treat—the war news. It’s a melancholy business, but I am deeply interested in it. Did you read Steevens’ description of the battle of Eland’s Laagte? I never read anything which gave me such a vivid idea of actual fighting. The young captain who asked to have his arm “straightened out” was the son of Professor Meiklejohn, with whom I used to live in St. Andrews. He was hit six times. As for other reading, it is mainly of the hand-to-mouth order. I

sometimes get so heartily sick of sermons and sermonizing, that, in desperation, I take to some other book.'

To his sister, after a severe illness—

'I am glad to learn from father's letter to-day that you are still making progress. Keep it up, lass! I never had any fears about you, because I always felt you were in better hands than Dr. ——'s or the nurse's, and I did not and do not forget to pray for you. I daresay this illness will have done you good in one way. You will have had time to think a bit and see life from another standpoint. Then I always think you never know how many friends you have, nor what sort, till a trouble like this overtakes you. I went to the workhouse infirmary to-day to see an old chap of seventy-one. He told me he hadn't one relative in the world. But my heart quite warmed to him when I found he had bronchitis and pneumonia! Perhaps that old man was the better off for your illness! For I talked to him as I can seldom talk to anybody, and left him very tired and very happy. Dear me! how we are all linked

together after all. The children are "waxing," as uncle used to say. They just go at you with an incessant stream of questions from morning to night. Here are a few from to-day's list. Why do cocks and hens lift their feet so high, and how do they do it? Why do we say "bumble-bee"? If it is a "bumble" why do we say "bee," and if it's a "bee" why do we say "bumble" before it? Does God make all the flowers, or does Jesus make some? If we cut out a tulip (from a book) and stick it in the ground, why doesn't it grow? Does the rain make *people* grow? Is that why God sends it? Why did not Jochebed tell the soldiers that Moses was a *girl* baby?

'By the way, a man asked me a question the other day which I could not answer—I wonder if you can: Are a cow's horns in front of its ears or behind them?

'I preached at one of the anniversaries here yesterday. The girls of the school were on a platform all round the pulpit and all dressed in white. I felt like a crow in a snowdrift.'

To this glimpse of the children may be appended the following:—

‘This morning our two half filled the bath to sail their boats. W—— is very proud of the fact that he can make a paper boat. Just before dinner I heard a great splash. When I got to the bathroom with a scolding on my lips, D—— stood dripping and laughing on the bathroom floor, and took the first word: “Daddy, aren’t you *very* sorry for me!” I put her to bed, but now I hear her crowing and laughing to herself as if bed were the finest place in the world.’

From the Eccles (Manchester) Circuit he wrote to a friend in Harrogate—

‘This morning I wrote out a sermon on Wrestling Jacob for the *Methodist Times*. This afternoon and evening—2.30 to 9.30—I have visited folks in all stages of depression and elation, and now I am ready for the blessed bed. Of course a parson’s life is a lazy life, but to-day, for instance, I have been almost a doctor in some houses, and quite a lawyer in others, and city-missionary and sick-visitor in others again, and it takes it out of one



as much as three services. I don't know what makes the difference, but I have perceptibly aged since we came to Manchester. Not that I am getting old—not in any sense that—but somehow I feel more of a man, and more ready for the fullest responsibilities which can come to a Wesleyan minister. Up to the time we left Harrogate I felt a junior, and willing to take the lowest place. Here I find that ministers and others assume that one is able for anything that comes. Oh, Charles, what a fool and a noodle I am at expressing myself! I felt *tremendously* comforted by reading in this week's *British Weekly* an account of Professor Drummond's first speech: "I think, I think—I think—I am very young." . I go into the Central Hall most Tuesdays for a lesson in the art of preaching, and every week I learn something. I am willing to begin at the first rung again if I can preach some day.

'This class for S.S. teachers at the Central Hall has done more than anything to make me feel at home in Manchester, and to make me feel inclined to accept all

the responsibilities that come. Did you ever read such an *I-I-I* letter as this? But you know, Charles, my man, that is always what I like best in other people's letters. The fuller they are of self the more one likes them. See? So when you write again don't scruple to say all you know about *yourself*.'

The following to me relates to the paper on 'Pulpit Prayers' included in this volume:—  
'MY DEAR BARNABAS,—Son of encouragement! I want you to steal an hour from your busy day, or better still, an hour from your Sunday rest, and do for me what a fireside crack would have done infinitely better.

'At the last Ministers' Meeting, I was asked to give the next paper. I have written it in the enclosed notebook, leaving each alternate page blank, and I want you to do the part of *Advocatus Diaboli* for me.

'Will you give me the benefit of your criticism? For I want to do this job very well—the best that is in me. Now you understand what I want. . Don't spare

the matter, the arrangement, the style, the sins of omission and commission. I shall be best pleased if you fill every blank page with offensive and adverse criticisms. I left them there to fill. I am very anxious to do justice to this opportunity. . . I am the first of the younger men to try his prentice hand, and for the sake of the juniors, as well as my own sake, I want to do well. I jest about the thing to you, but day and night I pray that God will give me something to say, and help me to say it effectively, and not for my own sake but His. I want to be and do my best for His sake.'

The Rev. Alfred Freeman, a supernumerary in Harrogate during Mr. Moorhouse's residence there, writes—

'It is quite in my heart to say how greatly I admired and honoured him as a circuit minister and pastor. I had frequent opportunities of hearing him preach. His sermons were crisp and fresh in style, well constructed, direct in their aim, and forcible in their appeals. I was often struck by the unostentatious but effective manner in

which his scholarship contributed to the elucidation of his theme. It was never paraded. In this, as in other matters, his modesty was strongly marked. But it was there, and his hearers reaped the benefit of his culture. It secured exactitude and precision of thought and expression, and in that way not only furnished intellectual gratification, but gave additional weight to appeals which often deeply moved the hearts of his hearers.

‘No presentation of him in the pulpit would be complete without reference to the bright and instructive addresses given at every Sunday morning service to the children and young people. In this work he was very happy. Wide reading was laid under tribute, old biblical incidents were made to live afresh, more recent and current events were pressed into his service with great skill and happy results. To his deep and manifest interest in the young, I believe much of his influence in the circuit could be traced.

‘Without doubt, he was a most diligent pastor. Devotion to his studies was not

allowed to interfere with this part of his work. Not only in the homes of the people was this seen, but in the way in which his learning and aptitude for teaching were placed at the disposal of young men and others who were wishful to learn. One tribute which I heard paid by a young local preacher in the last Quarterly Meeting he was at in the circuit illustrates this: "If," said he, "Mr. Moorhouse could stay with us longer, he would make a man of me."'

To his work in the Eccles Circuit, his colleague, the Rev. F. R. Smith, author of *Clog Shop Chronicles*, pays the following tribute:—

'Looking back upon all I saw of him in those happy three years at Eccles, the first thing that strikes me now, though it did not suggest itself so clearly at the time, is what a thorough Yorkshireman he was. He had many gifts, some at least in unusual degree; and taking them all together, they produced that impression of solid strength and downright sincerity which we associate with the men of his county. The most

abiding impression produced by Mr. Moorhouse upon me was that of competence; his strongly built, well balanced body was indeed the outward expression of a broad, robust, resourceful mind. All classes of hearers were glad to listen to him, but he was especially a teaching and a teacher's preacher. He used clear, strong, but simple English, with no hint of bookishness or parade of scholarship; but his hearers always felt they were being led over solid ground and might follow with absolute confidence. His were sermons that people took home with them and spoke of afterwards. Teachers, lay-preachers, bookish hearers, and the better educated young people found him specially helpful and attractive. Every now and again there came from him some sermon that touched on topics of the moment or salient points in current religious life and thought; these took special hold, were alluded to in class and prayer meetings, and quoted in conversation. Such, for instance, as his very striking and seasonable sermon on "Having a good report *of them which are without.*"

‘It was not at all unusual for him to preach from some difficult text which had been sent to him by some perplexed hearer, and on these occasions he was at his very best.

‘Thoroughness was the keynote of his life; and in his work he put one colleague at least to the blush by the pains he took and the care he bestowed upon preparations for even minor functions.

‘But whilst a brother-preacher silently marvelled at the laborious self-sacrifice revealed in his deliverances, the general hearer, happily “caring for none of these things,” eagerly took the rich and bountiful feast provided, and went away satisfied and glad.

‘As a colleague he was not merely loyal, generous, and considerate; he took a quiet but eager pride in his brother-ministers’ doings, listened avidly for scraps of commendation about them, stored them carefully up, and retailed them to the colleague concerned, with an amplitude suggested, I fear, more by his own generous wishes than by the actual expressions he was reporting. He took particular care to do everything

possible to show honour to his colleagues; again and again he left his beloved studies to be present at functions of no particular interest to himself and which had no claim upon him, but which enabled him in his unostentatious way to manifest his sympathy with the work of a brother-minister. It was highly characteristic of him that he did not talk about his work, but now and again one came upon little episodes which revealed the man and proclaimed also his quiet, earnest faithfulness to duty. It was no part of his duty that I know of, but he somehow found time to visit the hospitals in his neighbourhood; and though these things were unknown to his flock, they were highly appreciated by the patients. One poor fellow to whom he had paid some attention made a most touching little confession to him one day. Mr. Moorhouse had visited him several times, and one day, making use for devotional purposes of the patient's New Testament, he was astonished to find his own name written in bold characters across the title-page. Asking for explanation, he got this halting, pathetic



reply : " Well, you see, sir, as I lies here with plenty o' time on my hands, I thought I'd like to pray for somebody ; but I haven't no friends nowhere, and you've been so very kind to me I thought I'd pray for you."

' This little episode, told in confidence to a colleague, evidently gave him exquisite pleasure.

' One other trait of my friend I would mention, only I fear to touch a subject that has now become so holy. Nothing was more beautiful and yet more characteristic than his eager, lover-like, but entirely manly love for his wife. It is too sacred a thing to dwell upon now, but those who saw it were never able to decide whether it most adorned the manly man or the happy woman on whom it rested.

' A man, a Christian, a loyal colleague, a painstaking pastor, and a hard, careful student, the world is the worse and his friends and Church the poorer for the passing of Arthur Moorhouse.'

## VI

### DIDSBURY

1903-5

I N September 1903 Mr. Moorhouse succeeded the Rev. W. F. Slater, M.A., as tutor at Didsbury College, an institution for the training of Wesleyan ministers similar to the one at Headingley. He had been designated for the post twelve months before, the scale being turned in his favour when the vote was taken at Conference by a few simple but weighty sentences from his old friend and tutor, Dr. Findlay. He welcomed it as the opportunity of his life. He had always felt that teaching was his true work, and amid all his devotion to circuit duties a college tutorship had hovered on the horizon as the goal of his ambition. It had come some years before he dreamed it was possible, and had all

the zest of the unexpected as well as the longed-for.

The conditions of the new life strongly appealed to him. He would no longer feel the pinch of the three years' system, the only feature of Methodism that ever chafed him. He suffered too keenly during the months while his people were gradually coming to understand him, and then again from the wrench of separation.

The personnel of the Didsbury staff and his own share in the division of labour was wholly congenial. His subjects were Old Testament Languages and Literature, Philosophy, and English. Hebrew attracted him because he felt the dramatic power and poetic charm of the Old Testament, and longed to kindle the imagination of others with its glow and realism. Philosophy had been a favourite subject in St. Andrews days.

In study he was keen, thorough, and systematic, and possessed that most precious of gifts for a teacher, the power of inspiring others with his own enthusiasm. He was impatient of what Spencer used to call *dead*

facts, and in his earlier Headingley days would sometimes call up a look of reproachful surprise on the face of his tutor by a half pretended indifference to the shades of meaning in Pauline prepositions. Only things human interested him. Grubbing among parts of speech for the mere sake of accumulating information and compiling dictionaries was a task he could admire but was never tempted to emulate. It required an aptitude for persistent, colourless plodding that he always disclaimed. It was like counting pollen grains under a microscope with the cold steel point of a needle; he preferred hammering out to shape and use masses of truth all glowing with human interest.

His ulterior aim was always practical. He worked with zest at English literature because it gives a man wide horizons, refines and elevates his thought by communion with great minds, and makes his speech more noble and persuasive when speaking to others of the highest themes. Psychology, as he taught it, made a preacher wise to understand the workings of the human mind, and

logic saved him from trying to convince by fallacious arguments. Hebrew was a means of coming to hand-grips with the prophets and poets and historians of Old Testament times, hearing their very accents, feeling the heart's blood pulsing through their veins, and winning from them a living message for the men of to-day. The four studies on Elijah published in the *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine* and included in this volume were the fruit of an effort to show his students how the Old Testament might be used with force and freshness for homiletic purposes.

The following little document, written as a composition by a maiden of seven after hearing him tell the story, best shows how, even to the mind of a child, he could revitalize an Old Testament narrative. The original spelling and punctuation are preserved.

### THE LADY OF SHUNEM

‘There was once a lady and she lived at Shunem. She had a husband, who had a farm and he had a lot of lands as well as a farm and they both were very rich. A man

named Elisha passed by the house every day, once the lady asked him if he would come in to dinner with them and he said thank-you very much you are very kind, and so he came in. There were no Hotels or Inns in that time and he had to go a long way so he was glad to go in to the house. They were very kind to him and he enjoyed it very much. They built a very small house on the top of the roof, because all the roofs in that time were flat, and they put in it, a chair, table, couch, and candel-stick. There were steps up to the house and he went into the house every day. One day he asked the lady if she would like anything, and she said no. And then Elisha asked her if she would like a little boy, and she said, "O what nonsense. How can you give me a little boy." The next time he came to his little house on the roof, he did bring her a little boy, and was'nt she glad, how she loved him and huged him, and kissed him. So the boy grew up to be a big man and one day it was a beautiful sunny day and he was out in the corn-fields and he got a sun-stroke

and he fell to the ground, and his mother picked him up and laid him on the couch in Elisha's house and went to find Elisha. When she got there, she did not tell him that her son was dead but fell down at his knees and asked him to come to his little house and see what was lying on his couch. And he knew what was the matter and he came with her and made the boy alive.'

But notwithstanding his qualifications for the work at Didsbury, and the eagerness with which he had looked forward to it, when the new harness was buckled on and he threw all his strength into the collar, to his dismay the wheels refused to move. His Hebrew had grown rusty during the ten years of circuit work, and much of his philosophy was out of date. Psychology in particular had become a new science since he studied it at St. Andrews. His high ideal of tutorial efficiency lashed him to strain every muscle at the load, and there were times when he feared it might prove too much for his strength.

Nor did he all at once enlist the

sympathy of his students. His directness of speech was sometimes misunderstood and resented. And when he frankly admitted any little slip he had made, and modestly claimed to be a fellow learner with the members of his class, he was perhaps too readily taken at his word, and the range of his acquirements under-estimated.

During his first Christmas holidays I spent a few days with him. We dug in his garden, trudged on the roads round Didsbury, discussed all sides of his work. I told him it was just the first tug of the horses at the tram; that when the wheels were well started all would go merrily in its groove. The brief respite of the vacation gave him breathing space; the confession of his forebodings made them seem less formidable, and each succeeding term his work grew easier and his relations with the men happier.

Once since then he made a playful but affectionate reference to those intimate talks. I had amused him with a report of a conversation with a vicar of my acquaintance, a man of a cultured and beautiful



spirit. The vicar had said, à propos of George Borrow's habit of going out to hear his pigs grunt in the sty as a cure for depression, that in his own earlier days, in despondent moods, he used to lean over the door of his landlady's pig-sty, and scratch the pig's back. It comforted him to feel that if he were of no other use in the world, he could, at any rate, make that pig a little happier. Moorhouse laughed at the time, and a few days later he suddenly remarked, 'Well, Barney, old fellow, you've scratched one pig's back, any way!' Never had rougher rind of metaphor a sweeter kernel of meaning.

By the end of his first year he was well out of the bog, and in good heart for the future. He had conquered the initial difficulties of his work, and was succeeding in the class-room, as he had succeeded in his circuits, by unsparing labour, by thoroughness in detail, by contagious enthusiasm, by swift, outspoken frankness, and by a great love for his fellows and his work.

He spent a delightful summer holiday at Arnside with his family, and the term that

followed was one of the happiest periods of his life. Concurrent with his own growing joy in his work was the fuller appreciation of it and of the man himself by his students, to one of whom I am indebted for the following impressions:—

‘With the beginning of Mr. Moorhouse’s second year amongst us a great change was immediately felt. The old hesitancy was less in evidence. It was clear that he was steadily regaining his grasp of his subjects. Moreover, a new element appeared in his classes. Hitherto we had looked upon him as a teacher. We now came to regard him as pre-eminently a preacher. Two new items in the college curriculum gave him abundant scope for his special gift.

‘The men of the third year studied Old Testament criticism under him. None of us will ever forget the masterly way in which he handled this subject. He never shirked a difficulty. He honestly accepted the ascertained results of the Higher Criticism. But he also showed that these new principles were a positive gain to the reverent student of the Old Testament—

that so far from detracting from the worth of Scripture, they actually enhance its value in our eyes as a progressive revelation of God's will to man. His fearless desire to reach the truth, combined with an impregnable belief in the inspiration of Holy Scripture, brought back confidence to many whose faith in these things had undergone a partial eclipse.

‘Mr. Moorhouse also began a course of lectures on some of the Old Testament characters. The aim of these studies was not exegetical so much as homiletic. The lecturer would continually break off to suggest some way in which a point might be applied in the pulpit. The impression left upon his students by this fragmentary course was that the Old Testament is a book to be preached from. Those who had feared to look for sermons in a book which has been for long a field for historical criticism, began once more to see that it contains inexhaustible treasures of spiritual and ethical truth. Our tutor was never happier than when reminding us of the perennial interest which the Old Testament

narratives have for congregations through their faithful reflection of human life in its ever varying aspects. Not a few of his students will remember for years to come the pulpit inspiration which came to them in his class-room.

‘But these were not the only lessons we learnt. His example taught us the sacredness of duty, the supreme importance of diligence, the need of system and method. He was faithful in that which was little, and he had the capacity for taking pains. These things we knew, and the knowledge was not without its influence. The highest tribute an old student can pay is this: The more we knew him, the more we loved him, and the more we longed to be effective preachers of God’s word.’

Much of his spare time during the Christmas vacation was spent in putting his study into flawless order. He loved books, and neatness was habitual with him. But now he set to work like one who has fleshed his weapon and found himself master of it, and in the first respite from warfare carefully removes the signs of use and brings it

to a perfect edge and polish for future service. His MSS. were all classified in labelled files, every scrap of waste paper was cleared away, not a loose end of business left dangling. Engagements for the coming year were entered up in his diary, and a note made on the appropriate dates of the birthdays he wished to remember. Every letter was answered, and the predominant note in his Christmas correspondence was one of delight in his work: 'I am still hugely enjoying my work here. This year has been easier and, if possible, happier than last. We have an exceptionally fine set of men in the college just now, and it is a great pleasure to work with them and for them.' And again: 'It has been a long and busy term, quite as hard as last year but much more enjoyable, because there was a good deal more to show for one's work.'

On Sunday, January 15 (1905), he preached at Carver Street, Sheffield, and called at Wolstanton on Monday to give an address at the funeral of an old friend. The book he had taken to read on the journey was

Stevenson's *Master of Ballantrae*, and as usual he had marked several passages in pencil. One was most strangely apt, though no suspicion of how startlingly he was to illustrate it had crossed his mind: 'It is like there was some destruction in those delicate tissues where the soul resides and does her earthly business; her heavenly, I would fain hope, cannot be thus obstructed by material accidents. And yet, upon a more mature opinion, it matters not one jot; for He who shall pass judgement on the records of our life is the same that formed us in frailty.'

The students re-assembled on the Monday, saddened by the absence of one of their number, whose death took place on the day of their return. Mr. Moorhouse had been preparing an address for the college Communion service on the following Thursday, but in consequence of this bereavement he requested the Governor to speak instead. 'The address will keep,' he said. On Friday from nine o'clock to one he took his classes as usual, and the men remarked at dinner that he had never

seemed more at home in his work. Every phase of each subject that came up was handled with perfect grip and alertness. Meantime, he had returned to his own home, and had no sooner entered it than he fell to the floor, dead. A sudden manifestation of heart weakness of an altogether unsuspected kind had extinguished the flame of his life at the early age of thirty-nine.

Swift, swift, and yet how noble was his passing. At first, to us who were not by his side when he fell, it seemed wholly dark and tragic—the sudden quenching of a torch in black rushing waters just when its flame was brightest and its light most needed. Little feet were dancing round it; strong men were trusting it for guidance. And now it seemed all ended: the glowing, buoyant energy; the strong helpfulness; the sane, clear-sighted wisdom; the bright exuberance of spirit; above all, the white heat of a glad and noble affection. Why was not some spent and smoky rush-light plunged in the dark wave instead of this far-shining torch from its windy headland?

But when we came and stood by the brink of the great water, dreading to hear, as at the passing of another Arthur, 'a cry that shivered to the tingling stars, an agony of lamentation,' we heard instead the whisper, 'All is well.' The light of love we thought was quenched and dead was now 'a brooding star, a rosy warmth from marge to marge.' For his nearest and dearest the beauty of the past still shed its glow on the present and the future.

It was no house of gloom and tragedy to which we gathered, but of fruition and completeness. He might have known the great audit was at hand, so perfectly in order were all his affairs. And yet it was all in view of life, not of death; for never had he revelled more in his work. He was shot down like a soldier in the onrush of victory; he had breasted the slope and planted his flag on the battlements, and there is no memory of disablement and failing powers to dim the lustre of his joyous activities.

'We cannot weep for him who lies there; he died as he had wished to die,' was



the testimony of his colleague Dr. Moulton at the funeral service in the College Chapel. And as he uttered, in impressive stillness, the touching and beautiful words that follow, the great assembly of ministers and friends was united as the heart of one man in a throb of poignant sympathy. 'Our tears to-day are due elsewhere. I cannot trust myself to speak of that which fills all our hearts at this moment. But we can see with fervent thankfulness the signs of a Father's love which has stricken, but laid a healing hand already on the wound. The tiny hand of the unconscious child will have, we trust, the power to comfort, in fulfilment of the errand on which the heavenly messenger has come. And we pray through our tears to-day that the life so mercifully preserved, and the life so lovingly given, may both be rich with blessing, that the children may take up the torch of truth which has so early dropped from their father's hand, and bear it on towards the goal.'

## AFTERMATH



## THE LITERATURE OF KING ARTHUR<sup>1</sup>

IT is not a little remarkable that educated Englishmen are more familiar with ancient Rome than 'the dim rich city' of Camelot. They are more at home on 'the ringing plains of windy Troy' than 'in the sad, sea-sounding wastes of Lyonesse.' 'The old man Nestor' is better known than Merlin, Achilles than Lancelot. And yet the legends of ancient Greece and early Rome are not a whit more beautiful than the great epic which is all our own. The story of the Round Table Knights has kindled the imagination of England for a thousand years. There is scarcely one of our great poets who has not been under its spell for a time. All through the centuries King Arthur has embodied our national

<sup>1</sup> *London Quarterly Review*, 1895.

ideal. But in our own generation the old story has renewed its youth, and has stirred the heart and brain of England as it never did before.

Our object is to trace the history of that story, to show how it has changed with the changing times, and found a new expression as the need required, and yet has shadowed forth all that is best in the aspirations and ideals of 'God's Englishmen.' We shall not attempt to discuss the question whether King Arthur is purely a literary creation, or whether the story rests on some basis of historical truth. We do not for a moment suppose that a being such as Tennyson's Arthur, or the Arthur of the Norman-French romances, ever existed, but it seems probable that in the dim, uncertain twilight-time of our history a prince of that name ruled in Britain. 'The more we look at him, the more his figure recedes into the mist of legend or of myth,'<sup>1</sup> the more he becomes to us

that gray king, whose name  
Streams like a cloud, man-shaped, from mountain peak,  
And cleaves to cairn and cromlech still.

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<sup>1</sup> Stopford Brooke : *Tennyson*.

There are not less than six hundred place-names in Britain—all of them in that part of the island which is inhabited by a Celtic people—which are connected with the name of Arthur. Cader-Idris, Arthur's Seat, Arthur's Table, Arthur's Well, are only a few of the many which cluster round the name of the British king. Many more are referred to with patriotic pride in Drayton's *Polyolbion*.

If Milton was sceptical, Gibbon believed in an actual, historical Arthur. We shall not get much nearer the truth than Lord Bacon: 'There was truth enough in his story to make him famous, besides all that which is fabulous.'

As the story of Arthur grew, legend and myth grew round it, and the past 'won a glory from its being far.' Old and half-forgotten tales were attached to the name of the great hero, until wise men began to doubt if there ever was an Arthur. We must look for the original of these legendary additions in an old British mythology of the Sun-god and the land of the shades. The original of Gawain was probably some old sun-god. Even in Malory's account, when

the significance of the fact had long been forgotten, we find that he waxes and wanes in strength as noon approaches or recedes. Modred was king in the dark regions of death, and the Lady of the Lake was the goddess of that lower world beneath the waters—the land of Lyonesse. Arthur was a kind of British ‘Mercury,’ who makes war on the powers of darkness. Every winter he withdraws from the struggle wounded and faint, and returns again with every spring, glorious in strength. That is the original meaning of the cry, ‘Arthur is come again—come again and thrice as fair!’

Of the real historical Arthur little can be known. An old manuscript of considerable authority in the British Museum tells us that Arthur, the son of Uther, King of South Britain, was crowned at Cirencester A.D. 527, in the fifteenth year of his age, by Dubricius, Bishop of Caerleon. From the same source we learn that he fought with varying success against Cerdic the Saxon—that his life was one long heroic struggle for the independence of his people. A few facts like these, none of them completely

verified, form the historic basis of the story, but as time went on a halo of glory grew around the memory of the great king. A conquered, helpless people, crushed into the corners of Britain, groaning under the strong hand of oppression and wrong, fix their hopes on the Arthur who has passed, who shall come again; and they form their ideal of a secondary saviour, spotless like the Christ, his predecessor, and round him knights pure as himself, who shall redress the wrongs they suffer and break in pieces the oppressor.

The earliest literary form of the Arthurian legends was that given to them by Geoffrey of Monmouth, a Welsh priest of the time of Stephen, who wrote a *History of the Kings of England*, which, he said, was a translation into Latin of 'a book which Walter, Archdeacon of Oxford, had brought out of Brittany.' His work was completed in 1147. It was really an historical romance, in the form of an authentic chronicle. Geoffrey's book was not received with universal admiration by his contemporaries and followers. William of Newbury, a 'painful' and un-



imaginative chronicler of the next generation—a lineal ancestor, no doubt, of some Saturday Reviewer—denounces Geoffrey as having ‘lied saucily and shamelessly’: ‘He has made the little finger of his Arthur stouter than the back of Alexander the Great, and has represented his Merlin as a British Isaiah, except that he dared not prefix to his prophecies, “Thus saith the Lord,” and blushed to write, “Thus saith the devil.”’ Nevertheless, it was greatly admired by the reading public of the time, and was translated into French verse, first by Geoffry Gaimar in 1154, and again by Robert Wace in 1180. Wace’s translation was in rhymed octo-syllabic metre, and was called the *Brut*. He lengthened Geoffrey’s account, both from legends which he obtained from Brittany and from his own imagination. The next to handle the story was Layamon, a pious monk who flourished about the end of the twelfth century. He was the first to write the story in English, and so appealed to a different, if not a larger, audience. He first introduced the Round Table—‘a board exceeding fair, that thereat may sit sixteen

hundred men or more'; and yet the Table could be easily carried about! He added many details, of which the following is a good specimen. Speaking of Arthur's death, he says: 'Fifteen cruel wounds had he, in the least one might thrust two gloves.' No wonder he was a trouble to the painstaking annalists and historians who came after him. He was the true pioneer of Arthurian romance. In his hands Arthur became the Christian warrior, the *flos regum*. But the greatest of all the old writers of Arthurian romance was Walter Map. He lived at the Court of Henry II, and it was probably at that monarch's request that he collected the Arthurian stories then existing, added the story of the Holy Grail and others, and blended the whole into one harmonious cycle. In his work we find the first traces of any attempt at dramatic unity and a serious purpose.

After the work of Map was completed, the Arthurian romances reigned supreme in the literary firmament, and for nearly four centuries they formed the chief literature of Christian Europe. They were sung and recited and translated and copied times

without number. In ballads and songs, in poetry and prose, Arthur and his knights were immortalized. The legends 'lived dispersedly in many hands, and every minstrel sang them differently.' Every new teller of the tale added something of his own. There was something in the story which went right home to the broad-shouldered Saxon, though he himself figured in it as a heathen. It 'captivated all that was highest in the heart of the chivalrous Norman, himself the flower of valour and courtesy.' It was, as Sidney said, 'a tale which kept children from their play, and old men from the chimney-corner.' Not much is known of these nameless singers, but some of them write in a manly, straightforward style which has not been surpassed even in the pages of Tennyson. The following, describing Arthur's last battle, from an old alliterative poem by an unknown writer,<sup>1</sup> will speak for itself:—

Arthur of batayle neuer blanne  
To delè woundys wyke and wyde,  
Fro the morrow that it by-ganne,  
Tylle it was near the nyghtis-tyde ;

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<sup>1</sup> *Morte d'Arthur*. Edited by Mr. Furnivall.

There was many a sperè spent,  
 And many a thro word they spake,  
 Many a brond was bowyd and bente  
 And many a knightis helme they brake,  
 Rychè helmes they Roffe and rente,  
 The Richè rowtes gan to-gedyr Rayke,  
 And C thousand vpon the bente,  
 The boldest or even was made Ryght meke.

Many of these early romancers gave full scope to their vigorous imaginations. Arthur is magnified to something more than human. He fights with giants and dragons. Single-handed he slays his hundreds. England, Scotland, Ireland, Iceland, the Orkneys, Norway, Dacia, Aquitaine, Gaul—all these own his sway. In fact, his conquests seem to be limited more by the fancy of the narrator than by geographical probabilities.

But, as the story develops, Arthur gradually disappears into the background. Lancelot and Gawain, Percivale and Galahad, Tristram and Dinadan are brought into prominence. Every new knight has new adventures. Every castle forms the starting-point for some new expedition. In every wood there is a spring or fountain beside which an armed knight sits to challenge every passer-by. We try in vain to follow

the adventures of this knight or that, and finally lose ourselves in the confused tangle of stories. Arthur appears but fitfully among the throng. The 'unities' of the story are lost. The pure simplicity of the original British romance is gone.

In this state, Sir Thomas Malory found the stories. Little is known of him save what he himself tells us. He was a knight and probably a priest, and he 'ended his book in the ninth year of Edward the Fourth.' He took the legends 'out of certayne books of French, and reduced them into English.' But he was not a mere translator. Sir Edward Strachey tells us that 'a comparison with his originals shows careful and thoughtful recasting of whole stories,' and he again arranged them according to some plan. In 1485, nine years after Malory's work was finished, his book was printed in the Almonry at Westminster by Caxton. In the printer's preface to the book Caxton says: 'Many noble and divers gentlemen of this realm of England came and demanded me many and oft-times, wherefore that I have not do made and imprint the

noble history of . the most renowned Christian King . Arthur, which ought most to be remembered amongst us Englishmen tofore all other Christian Kings .

therefore I have, after the simple conning that God hath sent to me . enprised to imprint a book of the noble histories of the said King Arthur, and of certain of his knights, after a copy unto me delivered.' Malory's work consists of twenty-one books, describing the adventures of many knights. He did not altogether succeed in reducing the story to a self-consistent unity.

Let us trace the outline of Malory's story, and bring into focus its different episodes. If we keep this outline in mind, we shall better appreciate the deviations from it in later writers, especially in Tennyson.

Briefly then, the story of Malory's Arthur is as follows: Uther Pendragon, King of all England, was in love with the fair Ygerne, wife of Gorloïs. Nominally for an act of disobedience, really on account of his love for Ygerne, Uther made war on Gorloïs and besieged his wife within Tintagil Castle, in Cornwall. Gorloïs is slain in battle, and the

same night, with the help of Merlin, the wise magician, Uther enters Tintagil Castle, and meets Ygerne in the guise of her former husband. 'With a shameful swiftness' they were married, and Arthur was born—just two years before Uther's death. On the day of his birth the young prince was handed over to Merlin, who brought him to Sir Ector (Sir Anton in Tennyson), the father of Kay, the seneschal, 'a passing true man and a faithful.' In his family the youthful Arthur was brought up. Fifteen years are passed over in silence, and then we read that at Christmas time 'Merlin went to the Archbishop of Canterbury, and counselled him for to send for all the lords of the realm, and all the gentlemen-at-arms, that they should come to London by Christmas, upon pain of cursing.' Before daylight on Christmas morning the knights were assembled in the largest church in London ('whether it were Paul's or not, the French book maketh no mention'), and in the churchyard, before the high altar, was seen a flaming sword embedded in a marble stone. 'And letters of gold were written about the sword, that

said thus, "Whoso pulleth out this sword of this stone is rightwise King born of all England." All wondered at the flaming sword and the strange inscription, and each knight tried in turn to pull it from its place. But none succeeded. On New Year's Day, however, a boy who had come up to the feast with Sir Ector was in need of a sword, and, going up to the churchyard, Arthur easily drew the much-talked-of weapon from its place. The knights marvelled, and Arthur was not the least astonished of them all. It was revealed to him by Merlin that he was Uther Pendragon's son, and, to satisfy the doubting knights, the sword was put back again in its place, and thrice—at Candlemas, at Easter, and at Pentecost—Arthur drew it when every other knight had failed. The boy-king made his court at Caerleon. In the midst of war and bitter civil strife his kingdom was set up. They were troublous years which followed. Some said he was neither Uther's son nor king of theirs. Arthur was beset by foes without and foes within. And yet he prospered. He was seated one day in his stately hall at Caerleon,



when there came messengers to him from Rience, 'King of North Wales and all Ireland and many Isles.' They said that their master had overcome eleven kings, and hemmed his mantle with their beards, 'and they lacked for one place of the mantle,' which the beard of Arthur was intended to fill up. 'Thou mayest see my beard,' said Arthur to the speaker, 'full young yet for to make a hemming of it, but tell thou the King this; but, or it be long, he shall do me homage on both his knees, or he shall lose his head, by the faith of my body.' Arthur had met with King Rience once before. This was in Cameliard, the land of Leodogran. But though he had there defeated Rience another had conquered *him*. Here for the first time he saw Guinevere, 'the fairest lady living.' And now, when he felt firmer on his throne, he sent Merlin to ask her hand. Unlike the Tennysonian character, Leodogran was right glad to bestow his daughter on a king of such prowess as Arthur had shown himself to be, and, as a wedding gift, he sent the famous round table which had once belonged to Uther Pendragon.

At Camelot, before the stateliest altar in the land, surrounded by a company of noble knights unequalled in the world, 'the King was wedded unto dame Guenever, in the Church of St. Stephen's, with great solemnity.' And the land had rest for a while.

'Then King Arthur established all his knights and charged them never to do outrage nor murder, and always to flee treason, also by no mean to be cruel, but to give mercy unto him that asked mercy upon pain of forfeiture of their worship and lordship of King Arthur for ever more; and always to do ladies, and damsels, and gentlewomen succour, upon pain of death.' Then, for the second time, there came twelve messengers to Arthur's Court, demanding the tribute due to Lucius, the Emperor of Rome. They met with the same answer which had been given them once before, and the twelve returned to Rome, with a message far other than the Emperor expected. Said one of them to Lucius: 'I advise you to keep well your marches and straits in the mountains, for he is like to conquer all the world, and in his presence, the most manly

man that liveth.' Arthur hastily called a Parliament at York, and it was decided to set out for Rome at once with a great army. 'And Lucius came with all his host, which were spread out three-score mile in breadth.' They met on the eastern frontiers of France. The Romans had brought with them 'fifty gyants engendered of fiends . . . for to break the front of the battail.' Arthur fought with one of these fellows—'a great gyant named Galapas, which was a man of an huge quantity and height. He shortened him, and smote off both his legs by the knees, saying, Now art thou better of a size to deal with than thou were.' No man could withstand Arthur in battle, 'for the fire of God was on him,' and the bravest fled before his gleaming sword Excalibur. The Romans were utterly routed; their leader was killed, and Arthur marched on Rome itself, taking everything before him, 'and was crowned Emperor by the Pope's hand with all the royalty that could be made.' Then follows, in Malory's book, the account of the birth of Galahad, Lancelot's son; of the jealousy of Guinevere; of the madness of Lancelot when

banished from the Court by the Queen's commands. . . The next scene opens at Camelot. It was Whit-Sunday, and, as the King and his Queen were returning from hearing mass in the minster, a messenger came to say that a curious stone had been seen floating in the river hard by, 'as it were of red marble, and therein stack a fair and a rich sword.' Arthur read in golden letters on the pommel, 'Never shall man take me hence but only he by whose side I ought to hang, and he shall be the best knight of the world.' Arthur called his nephew, Gawain, that he might assay to draw the sword. But he could not, neither could any other, until a young knight dressed in red<sup>1</sup> armour stepped forward. It was Sir Galahad, the spotless knight, son of Lancelot, who had but lately arrived at the Court. It was known to all, from a prophecy of old-time and the teaching of Merlin, that when the sinless knight should appear, then should be seen again the Holy Grail, the cup which was used by our Lord at the Last Supper, and which Joseph of Arimathaea had brought

<sup>1</sup> Tennyson's Galahad always wears silver-white armour.

to Glastonbury. A wave of strong religious feeling swept through the Court. One night, as the knights were seated at supper after their return from evensong in the minster, a strange silence fell upon the hall. They looked each at the other, and all seemed fairer than before. Then with a noise like thunder and a cracking of the roofs there entered the Holy Grail covered with rich white silk, but none might see it, or who carried it, save Galahad. First Gawain and then another and another knight—a hundred and fifty in all—vowed never to rest till they had seen the Grail openly. And as Arthur heard their vows, his eyes filled with tears. ‘And then he said, Gawain, Gawain, ye have set me in great sorrow, for I have great doubt that my true fellowship shall never meet here more again.’ Yet, once more, while the knights were all together the King proclaimed a tournament, and there was jousting in the meadows by Camelot, and feasting in Arthur’s hall, and the bravest knights and the fairest ladies were there. When the tournament was over, they all heard mass in the minster, and, in the

morning, the knights 'mounted upon their horses and rode through the streets of Camelot, and there was weeping of the rich and poor, and the King turned away and might not speak for weeping.' Few knights ever returned from the quest, and only four had seen the mystic vessel. Lancelot's efforts had resulted in madness, and in the end he barely caught a glimpse of the Holy Grail. But no sooner was he in the presence of Guinevere again, than all his good intentions vanished. 'Then, as the book saith, Sir Lancelot began to resort unto Queen Guenever again, and forgot the promise and the perfection that he had made in the quest.

. And so they loved together more hotter than they did toforehand, that many in the Court spake of it.' Lancelot knew right well that malicious eyes were looking on, and slanderous whispers were spreading through the Court, and he makes another and another effort, pitiable from their very weakness, to leave the guilty Queen for ever. 'Wit ye well,' said Lancelot to the Queen, 'there be many men that speak of our love in this place, and have you and me greatly

in await. . . And when he had all said, she brast out on weeping.' Then, in one of those passionate outbursts, which contrast so strangely with Lancelot's silent but guilty love, for the second time she banishes him from the Court. But before many days are over, bitterly does Guinevere rue that she has banished her favourite. . . . The faggots are piled round a stake. Arthur stands with a sad, troubled face among his knights, and not far off stands the Queen, 'in the constable's ward.' She has been accused of poisoning a knight, and unless some knight will be her champion, Arthur has consented to her death by fire. The evening of the fatal day draws on, and no champion has appeared. At the last moment, amid the intense excitement of all the onlookers, an unknown knight enters the lists to do battle for the Queen. Sir Mador, who fights to revenge his poisoned kinsman, is 'a full strong knight and mightily proved in many strong battles,' but he cannot withstand the onset of that unknown spear, for it is Lancelot's! Guinevere is saved. The real murderer confesses his guilt, and removes

every trace of suspicion from the Queen. At this place comes the story of the Diamond Tournament, which Tennyson has closely followed in 'Lancelot and Elaine.' Next comes in Malory's book the tale of the Queen's Maying. Then we see in all its ugliness the enormity of the Queen's sin and Lancelot's. The climax has come; and the story of their crime, which had been darkly hinted at, is now blazed abroad. The traitor Modred feels that his time has arrived. A second time Arthur consents that his wife shall be burned at the stake, and again she is rescued by Lancelot, and carried away to his castle of Joyous Guard. By order of the Pope she is given up to Arthur, and Lancelot is banished from the country. At the instigation of Gawain, Arthur reluctantly follows him and makes war upon him, leaving England in the hands of Modred. It was a terrible trial to Arthur to fight against his dearest friend and the bravest of his knights, but still more terrible to find that Modred had usurped the throne and gathered round him an army of rebellious knights. The King returned to England to his last great



battle—that battle in the west, by ‘the sad sea-sounding wastes of Lyonesse,’ where all the flower of England’s knights were slain. ‘And many a grim word was there spoken either to other, and many a deadly stroke.’ All day they fought, and at night a hundred thousand lay dead. The King fought right worthily of his great name. Towards evening he saw the traitor Modred still alive. ‘Then King Arthur gat his spear in both his hands, and ran toward Sir Modred, crying, “Traitor, now is thy death-day come.” And he smote him with his spear throughout the body more than a fathom.’ Arthur, too, was sore wounded. He was carried to the edge of a mere close by, where three fair queens received him into a black barge, which bore him to his last resting-place at Glastonbury (Tennyson’s Avilion).

They carry him where from chapel low  
Rings clear the angel-bell—  
He was the flower of knights and lords,  
So chant his requiem well;  
His wound was deep, and his holy sleep  
Shall last him many a day,  
Till the cry of crime in the latter time  
Shall melt the charm away.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Dean Alford.

At the outbreak of the last civil war, Guinevere fled to Almesbury. Her experience was a bitter one. She passed through the fires, but she came out pure as gold refined. In a few years she was laid by Arthur's side. When Lancelot heard of Modred's rebellion, in spite of the bitter and irremediable wrong he had done to Arthur, he came with an army to his aid. But he came too late. When he heard of Arthur's death he took to 'the silent life of prayer.' He died on the double tomb at Glastonbury, and was buried in his own castle of Joyous Guard.

This is, of necessity, a very imperfect sketch of Malory's Arthur, but enough to show the main outlines. Here we see again an attempt at unity, both in the story as a whole and in the history of the separate characters, but the simplicity and purity of most of the earlier books is wanting. The book is

Touch'd by the adulterous finger of a time  
That hover'd between war and wantonness,  
And crownings and dethronements.

Caxton 'set it in print, to the intent that

noble men may see and learn the noble acts of chivalry, the gentle and virtuous deeds that some knights used in those days, by which they came to honour, and how they that were vicious were punished, and oft put to shame and rebuke ; humbly beseeching all noble lords and ladies, with all other estates

that shall see and read in this said book and work, that they take the good and honest acts in their remembrance and follow the same.' But there is much evil along with the good, and, what is worse, much confusion between good and evil. Arthur himself is not the sinless hero of the earlier romances. According to Malory it is not Lancelot's sin alone which works such baleful ruin, but Arthur's. The King brings his doom on his own head. The sin of his youth avenges itself in later, sadder days. The traitor Modred is his own son. And that is the key to the whole position in Malory's tale.<sup>1</sup> 'We look to Arthur, expecting to see the portrait of the Christian Hercules, the saviour of his race, and we are disappointed to find

<sup>1</sup> The story is worked out on these lines in a play by Mr. Henry Newbolt, *Modred: a Tragedy*.

instead the features of a wily statesman, who thrives by craft rather than faith.' We see the weak husband of an intriguing wife, the unhappy father of a rebellious son. There is one possible explanation of such a change. It is easy to see that this plastic story—mostly legend—was often adapted to the circumstances of the time in which it was written and re-written. It is more than probable that some of the men who wrote the stories which Malory 'translated' lived about the Court of Henry II, and that these writers represented living characters under the fictitious names of Arthurian heroes. Instances of the same thing are abundant in Spenser; and in our own times the first Lord Lytton has written a *History of King Arthur* in twelve books, in the preface to which he tells us that some of the characters represent public men of his own day. Keeping this in mind, it is not hard to see that the Arthur of Malory bears a striking resemblance to Henry II, the father of Geoffrey, the husband of Eleanor, the tool of Becket. But the comparison must not be pushed too far.

Malory's style, too, has manifest imper-

fections. Incident follows on incident, adventure crowds on adventure. The successful champion gets rid of one antagonist just in time to be ready for another. The defeated knight generally meets with some convenient hermit, who heals his wounds with wonderful rapidity. Tennyson's story of 'Gareth and Lynette' is typical of them all. An unknown youth arrives at Court and craves a boon—some impossible task. This he accomplishes through many adventures. He wins the hand of a lady somehow mixed up with it, gets her broad acres for a dowry, and lives happy ever afterwards. The different knights meet with the same kind of adventures, which are related in the same phraseology. The knights 'couch their spears' and 'come marvellously fast together that their spears break to their hands.' The defeated knight either 'goes over his horse's croup,' or his opponent has 'gate him by the neck and pulled him clean out of his saddle.' 'Then they draw their swords and lash together wonderly sore a great while . and either gives other many great strokes, tracing and traversing, raising and foining,

and hurtling together with their swords, as it were wild boars.' But if this sameness is a fault in our eyes—it was no fault in the eyes of Malory's readers—it is atoned for by the wonderful vigour and life, the ceaseless movement and action, and here and there the touches of truest pathos, which have endeared the book to young and old alike.

In 1587, a play called *The Misfortunes of Arthur* was 'presented by the members of Gray's Inn for the entertainment of the Queen' (Elizabeth), which we shall notice presently; but, except for that, after Malory, the story of Arthur was almost crushed out of remembrance by the study of the classics. Arthurian literature, like other romance literature, was for the time discarded and completely out of fashion. But the memory of it appealed to those who could best appreciate it. Arthur reappears in Spenser's *Faërie Queene* as 'Magnificence—a brave knight perfected in all the twelve morall virtues,' who comes to the rescue of all the other knights, as they succumb, one after another, to the world, the flesh, and the devil. But this is not the Arthur we know.

He has no connexion with the story we are studying.

Milton, we know, hesitated for long whether he should make Arthur the subject of his life-work instead of *Paradise Lost*.<sup>1</sup> Probably the story lacked that basis of solid fact and historical truth which was necessary to Milton's exacting mind. 'As to Arthur,' he says, 'more renowned in songs and romances than in true stories, who he was, and whether ever any such reigned in Britain, hath been doubted heretofore, and may again, with good reason.' Dryden, in his old age, longed to write a great epic on Arthur, whose freshness and life should make him remembered for ever; but death cut short his purpose. His play—*King Arthur*—was not taken from the Arthurian legends.

The play referred to above, *The Misfortunes of Arthur*, would probably have been considered a masterpiece, had it not been so soon eclipsed by the greater dramas of Marlowe and Shakespeare. Like the new

<sup>1</sup> See the poems: 'Ad Mansum,' ll. 78-93; 'Epitaphium Damonis,' ll. 268-276.

Lyceum play, it enlisted the genius of others besides the author, Thomas Hughes. Some of the dumb-shows which formed part of the play were invented by Francis Bacon. Here, Arthur knows from the first that Modred is his own son as well as his nephew, and the whole plot works out the retribution for that youthful sin. Guinevere disappears in the first act, and retires to a convent. The character of Lancelot is simply omitted.

This is a fitting place to consider the latest development of Arthurian romance—Mr. Comyns Carr's new play, *King Arthur*; and that for two reasons. First, because Mr. Carr has publicly announced that his play is based on Malory's version of the story. And further, although this latest treatment of the old story owes little or nothing to Tennyson, yet it will help us to understand some of the most important changes in the *Idylls of the King*. We have nothing to do here with the accessories of the play—Sir Edward Burne-Jones's designs, Sir Arthur Sullivan's music, the acting of Mr. Irving and his



brilliant company, the splendid setting, which is admitted to surpass anything ever previously produced even on the Lyceum stage—of these things we are not competent to judge. We have only to consider the play itself, as pure literature. We are concerned with Mr. Carr's handling of an old and favourite story. Nothing is said of the birth of Arthur, his coronation, or his early victories. The prologue shows us Arthur and Merlin in the dawning light, standing on the rocky shore of the Magic Mere. There Arthur receives the sword Excalibur and its wonderful scabbard, and Merlin reveals to him that he is Pendragon's son, their rightful owner. Here, too, by the help of Merlin, he sees the vision of Guinevere, and longs to make her his queen. This scene strikes the keynote of the play, for Excalibur and the scabbard and the beautiful Guinevere are all closely connected with Arthur's fate. But Morgan le Fay, a lady of the Court, and half-sister to the King, has learned from Merlin that only he who was born with the May can injure Arthur, and that know-

ledge intensifies her hatred of the King; for her son, the crafty Modred,<sup>1</sup> was born to her on May-day, and she covets the kingdom for him. We can see already the making of a tragedy.

The real action of the play begins when the royal wedding is over, and a hundred of Arthur's knights have vowed to go on the quest of the Holy Grail. All this time there is no indication of the love of Lancelot and Guinevere. But Guinevere knew it, though neither had spoken a word of it to the other, and she was not unwilling that Lancelot should go with the other knights on the Holy Quest. Lancelot himself was anxious to go, for he hoped in that way to break his growing passion for the Queen. The unsuspecting King, thinking of the barren board and the lean order that would be left at Camelot, begs Guinevere to entreat his best friend and bravest knight to stay. All too easily he was prevailed upon, and the scene ends in the mutual confession

<sup>1</sup> Modred : son of Morgan le Fay, as in Heber's *Morte Arthur*.

of their guilty love. No one was better pleased than the wicked Morgan le Fay, for she knew of the secret love of Lancelot and the Queen, and she hoped through that to bring ruin on the King. While Arthur slept, she stole the scabbard of Excalibur, which, as Merlin said, was mightier than the sword. That was the beginning of troubles to Arthur. He had likened his queen to the precious scabbard, for her coming had brought peace and gladness to his troubled kingdom. The second act, in strong contrast to the first, tells the story of the Queen's Maying—very much modified. While the King is away hunting, the Queen and Lancelot, and all the gay Court, go a-Maying. The joy of Lancelot and Guinevere in their guilty love is very short-lived, for the narrow-faced Modred and his ambitious mother had seen their stolen embraces. These two are not slow to tell their news to the King. In the beginning of the third act the body of the Lily Maid is borne down the river to Camelot, and in her dead white hand is a scroll, containing these words—

I that was named Elaine of Astolat,  
Whose mortal love for Lancelot passed all measure,  
Seeing he loves another, choose to die.

After this, Arthur is compelled to believe the slanderous whispers of Modred and Morgan le Fay concerning the guilty love of his queen and his friend. The two confess their guilt, and the King lifts his sword to strike Lancelot, but the memory of bygone friendship makes his arm powerless. Arthur is torn between pity and indignation. At that moment news is brought that Caerleon is besieged by Mark and Ryons (Rience), and the King sets out to make war on the rebels, leaving Modred in command at Camelot. The last act completes the story. When the King had departed, Modred gave it out that Arthur had been slain by Lancelot, and he offered Guinevere the choice of his hand or the stake—

Thou art Death's bride, or mine—thy choice is free.

She chose the stake, and an unknown champion in black armour appears, to do battle for her with Modred. It was not Lancelot, but Arthur himself. But

Modred is the one man whom Excalibur cannot harm, for his is a charmed life. His mother reminds him of an old-time prophecy of Merlin—

He Pendragon's son shall slay  
That is born with the May.

Arthur falls mortally wounded from his stroke. Before his death the King bids Bedevere to take Excalibur and cast it into the sea, for

Its home is in the sea, to wait that day  
When upward from the shrieking waves shall spring  
A vast sea-brood of mightier strain than ours,  
Bearing across the world from end to end  
One cry to all, 'Our sword is in the sea.'

The Queen is rescued by Lancelot, and the darkness comes down over her prostrate form as she bends to catch the King's dying words, and in the darkness one can just discern the dusky barge which carries him away to that sweet isle of sleep—Avilion.

The main threads of the narrative are skilfully drawn together. The story is well told. Attention is concentrated at the right point—on the mutual relations of

Arthur, Guinevere, and Lancelot; the situations are dramatic; the parts of the story hang together; the shadow of Fate broods over all. But the key to the whole story, the central conception of the play, is equally unlike Malory and Tennyson. Malory's is the story of a youthful sin avenged in later years. The love of Lancelot and Guinevere has no *essential* connexion with it. In Tennyson, all the ruin to king and kingdom is traced to the sin of Lancelot and the Queen. Modred's part is very small. He is merely the unconscious occasion of the final catastrophe, a tool in the hands of Fate. But here, the ruin comes about through the unquenchable ambition, the fierce malignity of Modred and his wicked mother. They take advantage of the course of events. Modred becomes a prominent character—more prominent than ever before. By making him the son of Morgan le Fay, as in Heber's *Morte Arthur*, Mr. Carr avoids the necessity for any reference to Malory's tale of incest. And the story of *King Arthur* is as true to the spirit of our own times as to that of the far-back days of

chivalry. It is the common tragedy of love unappreciated and faith rudely shaken, of falsest friendship and broken hopes, of shattered ideals and unavailing contrition.

We must add a word about the use of symbolism in the play, for that too will help us to understand much that is new in Tennyson's *Idylls*. We obtain a suggestive hint of the fate that is coming when Arthur makes the scabbard of Excalibur the symbol of his fair queen's loyalty. When the scabbard is gone nothing is safe—all things seem to work together for his ruin. When the Queen's loyalty is lost, there is nothing more to hope or care for. A fine touch in the opening scene indicates the national character of the legends, and strikes a patriotic note, when the sword which was 'forged beneath the sea' and 'tempered by the waves,' is made a symbol of England's rule over the sea—

and that warrior king  
Whose arm is strong to wield it in the fight,  
Shall rule a kingdom that shall rule the sea.

If Tennyson had been content with such a use of symbolism—natural and inherent

in the story itself—his Idylls would have had a deeper and more human interest, and we should not have been troubled with the allegory of ‘Sense at War with Soul.’



## II

### TENNYSON'S KING ARTHUR<sup>1</sup>

THE new interest in Arthurian literature dates from the beginning of this century. Many causes seem to have been working together to produce that result. The impetus given to the study of the classics by the Renaissance had almost spent itself, and events at home awakened a new interest in our own affairs. The poets of the new century began to find their inspiration at home, in the England of their own day. Our national life was consolidated and intensified. This movement of thought culminated about the middle of this century.

The victories of Wellington and Nelson seemed to awaken the memory of the brave days of old. They brought back to our

<sup>1</sup> *London Quarterly Review*, 1895.

remembrance the half-forgotten deeds of our fellow countrymen. Within two years of the battle of Waterloo two editions of the *Morte d'Arthur* were published; and since then the interest taken in Arthurian literature of all kinds has deepened every year. Sir Walter Scott did more than any other man to popularize the stories of romance. A slight acquaintance with either his prose writings or his poetical works is sufficient to show that he drank deep at that well. Bishop Heber, a personal friend of Scott, wrote a long unfinished poem, called *Morte Arthur*, which was a failure, because he laid emphasis on the externals of the story. He was dazzled by the magic and glamour of it, and so failed to see its deeper significance and its capacities for modern treatment. Wordsworth came under the spell of the Arthurian literature in his college days. Before he had found out what was to be his life-work, he had thought to—

settle on some British theme, some old  
Romantic tale by Milton left unsung.

Prophets and wise men said in the old

times that Arthur should come again. And has he not come again—‘come again, and thrice as fair’? In modern poetry, fiction, art, and music, ‘in every change by which the thoughts of men are widened and their hearts enlarged,’ we find, again and again, the influence of Arthur—‘blameless king and stainless man.’ Tennyson (*Idylls*), Matthew Arnold (*Tristram and Iseult*), Swinburne (*Tristram of Lyonesse*), and William Morris (*Defence of Guinevere*) have all borrowed from the storehouse of Arthurian literature. Burne-Jones, G. F. Watts, and Millais have all been touched by the spirit of these old legends. It requires no great penetration to see that many of Kingsley’s heroes are Round-Table knights in modern dress. A short jacket and a deer-stalker have been substituted for a coat of mail and a crested helmet, but the men are the same. Knightly strength, manly courtesy, ‘muscular Christianity,’ are the chief virtues of men like Amyas Leigh and Tom Thurnall. Grace Harvey is a modern Elaine.

Our own time, too, has seen its Arthurs.

Italy found her Arthur in Garibaldi, Hungary in Kossuth, and down-trodden Poland in Koseiusko. General Gordon was a hero of the same type. Surely, if any man ever kept the vow that Arthur's knighthood sware, he did. He rode about redressing human wrongs, he honoured his own word as if his God's, he spake no slander, no, nor listened to it. As we read again the sweet story of Elaine, who sought out Lancelot and patiently nursed him and endured through weary days the ill-temper of a strong man in his sickness, we are reminded that this toil-worn century can show us a nobler deed. We think of Florence Nightingale and the men who rose up on their sickbeds in the hospital wards of Scutari and 'blessed her shadow as she passed.' We are reminded of many another noble life, less known to fame, but spent in the same self-forgetting acts of mercy. The mere mention of such words as 'Lucknow,' 'The Birkenhead,' 'The Victoria Cross,' makes us feel that the knightly noble spirit of our forefathers has not yet died out, and there are men still

among us who come within measurable distance of our great national ideal. The trappings of chivalry are gone, the chivalrous spirit is with us still.

Here then was the capacity to appreciate whatever was best and most enduring in the ideals of chivalry. The time called loudly for a man who could translate those ideals into modern speech and show their bearing on the living present. Along with a deepened interest in the stirring life of the present, there had arisen a new sympathy with all that was allied to it in the past. The problem was, to show the connexion between these two—to give artistic expression to what was permanent in both. It was a difficult task; but by natural endowment and temperament and training, Alfred Tennyson was supremely fitted for it. He has not merely told us a story from an old book. It is a tale which beats and throbs with life—life as we know it. It is full of a deep meaning for us. It answers the need of the present hour.

Let us look at some of Tennyson's qualifications as an exponent of the

Arthurian story, and the capacities of the story for modern treatment. In the first place, when the best of the Idylls were written, Tennyson was in close touch with the time. The ideal Englishman of the middle of this century was the patriot-soldier, of whom the great Duke was the type—

The statesman-warrior, moderate, resolute,  
Great in council and great in war.

The heroes who suppressed the mutiny, the men who

Clear'd the dark places and let in the law,  
And broke the bandit holds and cleansed the land,

were held in highest honour and esteem, provided they were English, with English sympathies and English prejudices. Probably that ideal will never again take the foremost place in the estimation of our people, for the walls of partition which divide nation from nation are slowly giving way. Time and space are shrinking. The physical world becomes less and less. Things are making for a better patriotism: for the broader, deeper sympathies of the kingdom of God.

But that soldier-patriot ideal was one with which Tennyson was in completest sympathy. He had an intense whole-hearted admiration for such a character, and that intense belief is the first qualification of a great poet. Here was the very hero he required, and a story ready to hand, through which he could give expression to what he felt most keenly. And there was something in the national character of these legends which was exactly suited to give expression to the patriotic ideal of that time. So completely has the story of Arthur become identified with the interests of what we call 'England,' that we forget its true origin. The original Arthur was a British prince; his story was the Iliad of the Celtic people. But Tennyson's Arthur is a modern English gentleman. Whatever their origin, nearly all Tennyson's characters are English when they leave his hands. Paris, C  none, Ulysses — they are all English. The 'modern touches here and there' are not inserted as an after-thought to redeem them from a dead past. They are part of the man.

But Tennyson was more than 'a modern gentleman.' He not only had a vivid realization of the needs of the present, he had an intense sympathy with the past—at least with an idealized past. He had an eye for everything in it which made for order and good government. His patriotism always looked backwards. It was the self-complacent patriotism of after-dinner speeches. Here was a subject exactly suited to his genius—an idealized King of an idealized England—and he gave it the love of a lifetime. When a great poet gives fifty years of patient, sympathetic study to these old legends, is it any wonder that they whisper their secret and central meaning to him? Their very soul was laid bare to him, their eternal message made known to him. And there is nothing parochial in that; it is truth for all time, and for every land.

This fusion of past and present is always going on; the relations of the permanent and the transient always cry aloud for re-adjustment and re-statement. Every generation seems to be a time of change



and transition to those who live in it. The old order is always changing.

The old order changeth, yielding place to new,  
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.

And it always seems to some that 'all of high and holy dies away' with the old order. It is not so. The secret of the Idylls, true for all time, is the immortality of the Ideal. It changes with the changing times, but it never dies. Arthur passes—but he comes again 'with all good things—and thrice as fair.' He cannot die.

Tennyson has, for the most part, kept in touch with the old legends. He has not, like Spenser, used the names of the Arthurian heroes as labels for the creatures of his own imagination. He has made much the same use of the old chronicles as Shakespeare did in *Macbeth* and *King Lear* and *Cymbeline*. He is indebted most of all to Geoffrey of Monmouth and Malory. The two idylls of Geraint were taken from Lady Charlotte Guest's translation of the Welsh *Mabinogion*.

But it must not be supposed that Tennyson has merely versified the stories which

he found ready to hand. He made many additions and omissions, the reasons of which will appear presently, and the final result is his own. The completed Idylls are like a grand new building of splendid proportions, but the stones are old. Their curious carving, their huge strange shapes, give us an idea of the majestic pile of which they once formed a part. Tennyson's building is new and modern and stately; it recalls the past, but it is best suited for the present. Every line and shadow in it reminds us of the genius of a great poet-architect. The general effect is grand and overwhelming. There are defects in the details—what great building is without them?—nay, we know that the plan of construction was changed more than once before the building was completed; but the finished result is symmetrical; every part is in keeping with every other part, and with the plan of the whole.

Some have found fault with the form in which Tennyson tells his story. Mr. Ernest Rhys, for instance, says that in Tennyson, 'what has been called our

English epic has lost its epic proportions, and its fatal coherency, in the daintier loveliness of an idyllic presentiment.' There would have been more excuse for such a criticism if it had been written thirty years ago, before the connexion of the Idylls with one another was made apparent. It seems to us that in Tennyson's hands the Arthurian stories have assumed an 'epic proportion' and a 'fatal coherency' which they never had and never could have before. In our opinion, the Idylls taken collectively form the finest epic poem which this century has produced. In the order in which they stand they form a complete cycle. From the birth of Arthur on the night of the new year, through the spring-like freshness of 'Gareth and Lynette,' and the glorious summer of 'Lancelot and Elaine,' and the dripping autumn of 'The Last Tournament,' to the death of the old year in 'The Passing of Arthur'—all this is one self-consistent poem, epic in intention and meaning, if not strictly so in form. The first instalment of the poem—'Morte d'Arthur'—was enclosed in a piece called 'The Epic,' and that piece

itself was the first poem in a book of *English Idylls*. As early as 1842 Tennyson had conceived

His epic, his King Arthur, some twelve books,

of which 'Morte d'Arthur' was the eleventh, and he lived to work out his conception. The completed poem consists of twelve idylls, with a prologue, 'The Coming of Arthur,' and an epilogue, 'The Passing of Arthur.'

It is difficult to think of any form which would have been at once so popular and so effective as that which Tennyson chose. The idyll is read where the longer poem would have no chance. Each idyll is complete in itself, though each is part of a larger whole. What is more to the point, this form allowed of indefinite additions to the story. Every reader knows that the fourth idyll of the series, 'Balin and Balan,' was published last (1886). This form, then, seems to have been a necessity of the gradual growth and development of the story in Tennyson's hands. The recent development of the prose idyll, carried out by Barrie,

Crockett, 'Ian Maclaren,' and Jane Barlow, probably received its first impetus from Tennyson. At any rate, the *Idylls of the King* did much to popularize that form of literature and reveal its great possibilities.

The first instalment of Tennyson's great work, apart from the fragment already mentioned, consisted of two idylls, 'Enid and 'Nimue,' 'The True and the False', which were published privately in 1857. These were quickly suppressed, but late in the following year they were published again as 'Enid' and 'Vivien,' along with two others, 'Elaine' and 'Guinevere.' Few readers at the time suspected that these were parts of a larger work. They were looked upon for the most part as two pairs of pictures, four types of womanhood—true love and false love, true wife and false wife. The harlot Vivien was contrasted with the innocent Elaine; Enid, the true wife, with Guinevere, the false.<sup>1</sup> It seems more than likely that the alternative title of the first pair was partly responsible for the impression which the *Idylls* made upon the average reader—that these characters were

<sup>1</sup> Stopford Brooke.

studies and types of womanhood. Whether Tennyson intended it or not, they *are* types, more or less conventional. Lynette is the type of petulance, Enid of patience. No character except Lancelot is sharply defined. The individuality of each is rubbed down to make it conform to the type. The picture of Lancelot is like a Rembrandt portrait; most of the other characters remind us of a composite photograph. The background is not light but shadow. Especially is this true of the character of Arthur himself. He is too shadowy. But probably Tennyson knew his own powers, and the capabilities of the story, better than any of his critics. No fault has been found with Arthur which is not indicated in the Idylls themselves. It was neither necessary nor possible to give the characters of the Idylls the same distinct, well-defined individuality which is given, of necessity, to the characters of a great drama. We do not blame Homer because he had not the genius of Shakespeare.

This reversion to type in the evolution of the Arthurian heroes was further accentuated by another consideration. *Tennyson chose to*

*treat the subject allegorically.* This was not at first a fixed idea in Tennyson's mind, but was partly an afterthought. It first came into distinct view in 'The Holy Grail' (1869). Many incidents in that idyll are not found in Tennyson's originals, but were invented for the sake of the allegory. This is still more true of 'The Coming of Arthur' (1870), which is almost wholly allegorical; and along with 'Gareth and Lynette' (1872), Tennyson published his 'Envoi to the Queen,' in which his allegorical intention is plainly set forth—

accept this old imperfect tale,  
New-old, and *shadowing Sense at war with Soul*  
Rather than that grey king

And if there can be any doubt after that, we have Tennyson's express declaration to his friend Knowles:<sup>1</sup> 'By King Arthur I always meant the *Soul*.' In all the later additions to the story, Tennyson is careful to make the allegory prominent, and the four idylls which were published before the allegory was thought of, were altered to square with it.

In this allegory of 'Sense at war with

<sup>1</sup> *Nineteenth Century*, January 1893.

Soul,' then, Arthur represents the Soul, or the Ideal—the only reality; and the necessity for the Ideal to fulfil itself in Sense is indicated by his desire to marry Guinevere—

for saving I be join'd

To her that is the fairest under heaven,  
 I seem as nothing in the mighty world,  
 And cannot will my will, nor work my work  
 Wholly, nor make myself in mine own realm  
 Victor and lord. But were I join'd with her,  
 Then might we live together as one life,  
 And reigning with one will in everything  
 Have power on this dark world to lighten it,  
 And power on this dead world to make it live.

If Arthur represents the Soul or the Ideal, Lancelot represents the Imagination, Merlin the Intellect, Guinevere the Heart, Vivien the Flesh. The Lady of the Lake—

Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,

represents the Church—

a mist

Of incense curl'd about her, and her face  
 Well-nigh was hidden in the minster gloom.

There is little doubt why Tennyson chose this allegorical method. He hoped in that way to provide for the continuity of the story, to show the connexion of the idylls with each other, and thus give a kind of



organic unity to the whole. But in our opinion, the defects of that method far outweigh its advantages. The allegory has a kind of intellectual interest. It is a literary curiosity. It makes an interesting puzzle for those who care to hunt for hidden meanings. But that is not poetry. The surest way to spoil the pleasure of reading the *Faërie Queene* is to hunt for the double allegory. When we read the *Pilgrim's Progress* we let the allegory take care of itself. One does not object to the allegory in the *Idylls of the King*, but to the prominence which Tennyson has given to it—the anxiety which he betrays lest we should overlook it. And wherever the allegory intrudes the story loses in human interest and in dramatic power. The poet should have had more faith in the story itself. It points its own moral, it teaches its own lesson. If the allegory is ignored, the story is more interesting without it. Every reader will see in it so much meaning as he is capable of seeing—every reader will see a different meaning, each will be true and each beautiful.

The prominence of the allegory explains

nearly all Tennyson's alterations of the legends. In the account of Arthur's birth, for instance, he keeps touch with the old tale as told by Bedevere, which makes him the son of Uther and Ygerne; but, for the sake of the allegory, he immediately adds the story of the naked babe lashed up to Merlin's feet by a great sea wave on the night of Uther's death, the story of

The shining dragon and the naked child  
Descending in the glory of the seas.

The coming of the Soul is indicated by the poet's favourite figure. It comes as it goes—

From the great deep to the great deep.

The common people have their rumours; some say he is a 'changeling out of Fairy-land'; others tell

How once the wandering forester at dawn,  
Far over the blue tarns and hazy seas,  
On Caer-Eryi's highest found the King,  
A naked babe.

The object is, of course, to surround the birth of Arthur with a cloud, not of shame but of mysterious doubt. But Tennyson will

never allow his readers to forget that Arthur represents the Soul. Hence his whole character is nebulous. He is a brooding presence, felt, but hardly seen. He is known by his influence on others rather than his own doings. His relations with Modred are very different from Malory's account of them, because the allegory requires that he shall be the *flos regum*, the stainless king.

There are other alterations, for which the allegory is in no way responsible. All these are in keeping with the spirit of the legends. They are alterations, not distortions. They free the story from what is temporary and accidental.

Let us look at the story on its own merits, then, apart from the allegory. It is no part of the object of this paper to explain the details, or to show the significance of the separate incidents of the Idylls, but to indicate the general drift of the story; to lay bare, if possible, its central meaning, and to point out its message for our own generation.

In the opening lines of 'The Coming of Arthur,' Tennyson gives us at once the key

to the whole story. He brings together the three chief characters — Arthur, Guinevere, and Lancelot. They stand out in the foreground of the completed picture. The other characters serve only to throw these three into strong relief. In their mutual relations to each other we must look for the solution of the problem of the Idylls.

After the great battle against the Barons and the petty Kings who had disputed Arthur's claim to the throne, the young King spoke to

his warrior whom he loved  
And honour'd most,

the brave Sir Lancelot, and the two

Sware on the field of death a deathless love.  
And Arthur said, 'Man's word is God in man :  
Let chance what will, I trust thee to the death.'

Then in the spring-time of the following year, Lancelot was sent to fetch Guinevere, Arthur's bride, to the Court, and before the stateliest altar shrine in Britain

the two  
Sware at the shrine of Christ a deathless love :  
And Arthur said, 'Behold thy doom is mine.  
Let chance what will, I love thee to the death !'

Those words are surcharged with fate. In that double love, that double trust, is the making or the spoiling of a kingdom. The story which Tennyson is called to tell is the unfolding of the possibilities which lay within that double promise. And the subject is one which touches the deepest thing in his character. What Mr. John Morley calls 'the ethics of the rectory parlour' were dearer than life to Alfred Tennyson. There was nothing he believed in so firmly, emphatically, earnestly, as reverence for the marriage-relationship, the holiness and sacredness of love. That was a question of supremest importance, a vital question for him; and therein lies his message for our times. All succeeding generations of Christian readers will be grateful to him for what he said, and for what he left unsaid, on that matter. If we can read the signs of the times, the greatest fight of this dying century will be round some of the issues which are necessarily raised in the treatment of a subject like this.

With this key in our hands, then, let us

approach the story. Arthur begins his work in a time of anarchy and confusion—

For when the Roman left us, and their law  
Relax'd its hold upon us, and the ways  
Were fill'd with rapine, here and there a deed  
Of prowess done redress'd a random wrong.

That was all. There was no central and recognized authority—

For many a petty king ere Arthur came  
Ruled in this isle, and ever waging war  
Each upon other, wasted all the land;  
And still from time to time the heathen host  
Swarm'd overseas, and harried what was left.  
And so there grew great tracts of wilderness,  
Wherein the beast was ever more and more,  
But man was less and less, till Arthur came.

But Arthur 'drew in the petty principedoms  
under him, and made a realm and reigned.'  
We are introduced at once to the young  
King, crowned among his knights—

Few, but all brave, all of one mind with him,  
sharing his high hopes and carrying out  
his great resolves, bound to him by vows

Of utter hardihood, utter gentleness,  
And loving, utter faithfulness in love,  
And uttermost obedience to the King.

Others may doubt, but, like Lancelot,

those know him for their king who have seen him when the fire of God descended on him in the battlefield. By his repeated victories, his throne is made secure; but Arthur feels that something is still wanting before he can complete his work. He has set himself an ambitious task—nothing less than a world reclaimed—

and could he find  
A woman in her womanhood as great  
As he was in his manhood, then  
The twain together well might change the world.

But it was only on condition that he be joined with the woman he loved, with her who was ‘the flower of all the west and all the world.’ All Arthur’s plans for the future, all his hopes of success, depended on that. *With her*, he could ‘work his work wholly.’

And so, in April, ‘in the boyhood of the year,’ when the land was clothed with

sheets of hyacinth  
That seem’d the heavens upbreking thro’ the earth,

Lancelot was sent to fetch Arthur’s bride. Many a time in after days did the Queen’s thoughts return to that spring-time journey

with Lancelot to the Court. Always, after that, she loved

The wild-wood hyacinth and the bloom of May.

And often in her solitude at Almesbury,  
her thoughts

Came to that point where first she saw the King  
Ride toward her from the city, sigh'd to find  
Her journey done, glanced at him, thought him cold,  
High, self-contain'd and passionless, not like him,  
'Not like my Lancelot.'

'As yet, no sin was dream'd.' But there was 'the little rift within the lute.' There was the shadow of that cloud which was to darken all. On the royal wedding-day, when the holy Dubric spread his hands above them, he blessed them—'And may thy queen be one with thee,' he said. But even then, while the Queen's hand was clasped in Arthur's before the altar, her eyelids were drooping. She was thinking of Lancelot. Already the handwriting was on the wall, for those who could interpret it. For the present, all went well.

And Arthur and his knighthood for a space  
Were all one will.

There was peace in the land. It was 'a





There is the vague presentiment of evil days to come. And somehow, we do not sympathize with Arthur. He is too great, too perfect. He lacks that 'touch of nature' which 'makes the whole world kin.'

We turn to Lancelot—'the best knight and goodliest man'—in all but the one great failure of his life, a knight peerless. He is Arthur's chief warrior and greatest friend. He, more than any other, understood 'the vast design and purpose of the King' to whom he swore undying fealty on the battlefield. And yet it is he who is the cause of all the ruin. He is the type of truth warped into falsehood, honour itself rooted in dishonour. How well we seem to know him—'his broad clear brow,' 'his coal-black curls,' 'his large black eyes,' his gaunt spare figure, 'the mellow voice,' 'the high sweet smile,' the bronzed and weather-beaten face

Seam'd with an ancient sword-cut on the cheek.  
 The great and guilty love he bare the Queen,  
 In battle with the love he bare his lord,  
 Had marr'd his face, and mark'd it ere his time.

Yet there is a proud dignity and stateliness  
in every movement.

Marr'd as he was, he seem'd the goodliest man  
And noblest.

Everybody wonders at the grace and  
versatility of the man. He is faithful to  
Arthur as he had sworn to be, and yet

The most disloyal friend in all the world.

He is faithful to the guilty Queen—

• Love-loyal to the least wish of the Queen ;

and yet it was a faith unfaithful, which kept  
him falsely true, and between the two his  
life is torn asunder.

Tennyson says all that can be said to  
excuse the sin of Lancelot and Guinevere.  
But after all it *is* sin ; it is never finally  
excused. It was the delicate instinct of a  
true poet which made him send Lancelot<sup>1</sup> to  
bring her from her western home ; and he  
suggests that when she first saw him, she  
mistook him for the King. They loved each  
other from the beginning. He was 'a man  
made to be loved.' There was something  
irresistible, inevitable, in their love. There

<sup>1</sup> In Malory's tale, it is Merlin who brings her to the  
Court.

was something noble in it too—courteous, silent, absolutely faithful. They loved all through the golden time, and the nobleness of the time pervaded their love.<sup>1</sup> And yet all the ruin is traced back to them. Lancelot is too noble, too sensitive to honour and all high things, to sin thus without self-reproach. 'Another, sinning on such heights, had been the sleeker for it.' But not so Lancelot. It seemed to him as if all of pure, knightly, and noble in him twined and clung round his one sin. And in his better moments he made

Full many a holy vow and pure resolve

to break his love for Guinevere; but the image of her queenly face 'dispersed his resolution like a cloud.' He cannot break his bonds. He would not if he could. As he sits by the inrunning of a little brook and watches the barge that brought the body of the lily-maid move down the stream to Astolat, he says—

I needs must break  
These bonds that so defame me: *not without*  
*She wills it.*

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<sup>1</sup> Stopford Brooke.

The inevitable deterioration began there. A man cannot do such violence to his own conscience with impunity—not even Lancelot. He cannot be the same man after that. The interest dies out of his life. He cares no longer for name or fame, or anything. He goes about the Court ‘in half disdain at love, life, all things.’ He sits in Arthur’s place at the last tournament, but it is nothing to him. He is like ‘one who sits and gazes on a faded fire, when all the goodlier guests are past away.’ The struggle with his better self is over. It has ended for the present in defeat. There is now ‘the quiet content of accepted guilt.’

The sin of Lancelot and the Queen did not end with them. We can trace its mark through every idyll. The whole story works out the consequences of that one sin. The moral of the completed Idylls is summed up in that. We saw it in the drooping eyelids of the Queen on the wedding-day ; she was thinking of Lancelot then. Their guilty love began to be whispered about the Court ; it was only a

whisper, a vague suspicion—‘there lived no proof.’ But for one of Arthur’s bravest knights, the moody Geraint, there is an end to peace ; and faith in life and love are no more to *him*.

Then comes Balin, who had fought with his anger for years ; and he thinks if only the peerless Queen would help him, he might succeed. But a breath of suspicion undoes everything. If Guinevere is false and Lancelot a traitor, then there can be no faith in man or woman for him. This atmosphere of suspicion is the very life of the harlot Vivien, the most repulsive of Tennyson’s characters. ‘There is no being pure’ to her ; no fair name is left unsullied where she comes. ‘She left not even Lancelot brave nor Galahad clean.’ Even grey Merlin, with all his years and all his wisdom, yields to her shameful enticements, and Arthur’s best adviser is ‘lost to name and fame and all things.’

What his sin had done for Lancelot we have seen. But for the shackles of that old love, he could have married the one woman who was worthy of him, the

lily - maid of Astolat. But his sin and Guinevere's killed her. She was the last and dearest victim. Not Lancelot only, but many another knight was startled into the hope of better things by the pure dead face of Elaine—

And they cross'd themselves for fear,  
All the knights at Camelot.

Then came the Quest of the Holy Grail, which seemed to some a movement toward better things. But Arthur thought otherwise. It left him with 'a barren board and a lean Order.' The leaven of goodness was gone from his Court, and those who were best able to right the wronged and succour the oppressed were 'following wandering fires.' The chance of noble deeds came and went unchallenged—the glory of the Round Table was no more. The King felt that his goodly fellowship could never be the same again. The severance between good and evil declared by the Holy Grail was never healed. The life had gone—only the shell remained. The knights had lost their reverence for the King. Arthur could not fail to notice that, though his very nobleness,

his utter trust, made him blind to the cause of it—

their vows—

First mainly thro' that sullyng of our Queen—  
Began to gall the knighthood.

It was her 'disloyal life' that 'wrought confusion in the Table Round.' The material that was left was such as Modred could work with. The way was opened up for his treachery. The life at Court was the same outwardly—fair without, rotten within. The poison is working and spreading—the poison of that one secret sin. The tournaments go on, and ladies smile; but Innocence is dead, and purity in man or woman is a byword. Others, less worthy, less noble than Guinevere and Lancelot, take foul examples from fair names; and the same sin in them is fouler, baser, because it contains no element of honour or nobleness to redeem it. Tristram and Isolt had 'crown'd warrant for their crowning sin.' Their love, as Tennyson paints it, is death to all virtue and goodness. The poison had spread. The worm within the rose had done its work. 'Lured by the crimes and



frailties of the Court,' the heathen rose against Arthur again, and made their last stand in the north. When Arthur leaves, with the best of his younger knights, to quell the insurrection, we are not surprised that the end comes quickly. Lancelot fled to France: Guinevere took refuge at Almesbury.

The last interview between Arthur and his shamed and ruined wife is wholly of Tennyson's creation. In that he reaches the high-water mark of all his poetry. The poet himself said to his friend Knowles:<sup>1</sup> '*Maud* and *Guinevere* are the finest things I've written.' We hear the rolling majesty of the King's accusation and forgiveness. He goes over all the old sad story, the treachery, the sin, the grief of it, the wrong to friendship and to faith—the pang that made his tears burn. He tells her how she has spoilt the purpose of his life. 'The loathsome opposite of all my heart had destined did obtain, and all through thee!' Yet, 'I forgive thee as Eternal God forgives.' As he pours forth

<sup>1</sup> *Nineteenth Century*, January 1893.

the language of his broken heart over the prostrate form of that proud queen who was 'the fairest under heaven,' his voice is 'monotonous and hollow, like a ghost's'—terrible with doom. He has been brought to ruin by the two he loved best in all the world. One scene looms darkly through the mist, which he must face. It is 'that last dim weird battle of the west.' There is nothing in the Idylls approaching in grandeur and depth of feeling to the description of that last battle 'in the sad sea-sounding wastes of Lyonesse.' We read it with quickened breath, as if we felt the thick cold mist which clings to the earth 'like a face-cloth to the face.' And at evening, when the wind blows up from the sea and clears the heavy mist, and reveals the heaps of slain and wounded men, it shows us two men still unhurt—Arthur and Modred. Each flies at the other, and Arthur, with the last stroke of Excalibur, strikes the traitor dead. The King himself, sorely wounded, is carried to a ruined chapel near at hand. He is a king yet, and, king-like, he compels the bold Sir Bedevere to do

what he would hardly have done for love's  
or duty's sake—

if thou spare to fling Excalibur,  
I will arise and slay thee with my hands,

When the sword had been given up to  
the unseen powers who entrusted him with  
it, Arthur is carried to the margin of the  
mere, where waits a barge, all draped from  
stem to stern in black, and is carried away  
by the three fair queens who stood before  
him at his crowning—

To the island-valley of Avilion,  
Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,  
Nor ever wind blows loudly.

And Bedevere watched the barge until it  
became a little speck on the horizon—

And the new sun rose bringing the new year.

Tennyson has woven about the story  
of Arthur a tragic fatefulness which has  
never been surpassed. The atmosphere of  
the Idylls is wholly modern. No early  
romancer, no mediaeval writer ever dreamed  
of such a fate. Not one of them could have  
seen the meaning in the story which  
Tennyson saw, and which he compels us

to see. The awful consequences of one damning secret sin have never been so sternly, so pitilessly represented. And yet, for the evil-doers themselves we have nothing but pity. The better self in each was triumphant at last. Lancelot is none the less courteous, chivalrous, noble, because his sin has had such terrible consequences. Guinevere comes out of the fiery trial every inch a queen. Her sin was great, and so was her repentance. The King's divine forgiveness and the assurance of his great hope for her are the beginning of a new life for Guinevere. They have revealed to her at last Arthur's true nature. She sees him now for what he is—'the highest and most human too,' and

We needs must love the highest when we see it,  
Not Lancelot, nor another.

As for Arthur—the great purpose of his life is broken. His realm has 'reeled back into the beast.' But *he* is not conquered. His honour is unsullied, his purity untarnished, his sword without a stain. All that is spiritual in his kingship abides—'all that is allied to what abides within the veil.'

His faith wavers once—but that was his testing agony—not to recur. The poem ends with a great hope, like a resurrection hope. Leodogran's dream is fulfilled. The King stands out in heaven, crowned. His first and latest knight hails him as King among the dead, King in the life beyond—King everywhere!

## COLLEGE LECTURES ON ELIJAH<sup>1</sup>

### I. THE METHOD OF COERCION

In Elijah was embodied the protest of the national will which was raising itself in such powerful opposition against the insult which was about to be done to Jehovah. With a clear consciousness of the real point at issue, he takes the field for Jehovah against Baal, does battle for the moral rights and freedom of the human spirit, as against the tendency to abandon them in the religion of Nature, which was demoralizing and debasing to man.—PROFESSOR KITTELL.

THE story of Elijah, as Ewald reminds us, is like a book with the first page torn out. He is introduced with startling suddenness. He appears and disappears as if the Spirit of God carried him hither and thither. There are hints in the later narrative, however, which supply us with materials for rewriting the missing page. If we can restore it—and I think we can—it will give us the background against which the figure of Elijah stands out in bold relief. Let us try.

<sup>1</sup> *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, 1905.

In the short half-century which had elapsed since the division of the kingdom—a period much shorter than the reign of Queen Victoria—there had been seven kings in Israel. It was a time of oppression from without and bloodshed and misery within. At last Omri came to the throne, a shrewd, far-seeing man, who built Samaria and ruled Israel with an iron hand. But in practical statesmanship and political sagacity, Ahab, son of Omri, was superior to any of the kings of Israel. He had the sense to bring to an end the constant feud with Judah. He recognized that the one thing his country had to fear was the growing power of Syria, his neighbour on the north.

To strengthen himself against Syria he followed the policy of Solomon, and made an alliance with another northern neighbour, the King of Tyre, and the compact was fixed and strengthened by his marriage with Jezebel. From a political point of view, this marriage was a consummate piece of statecraft, and Ahab might well congratulate himself upon his success. It secured his

borders against invasion from the north, and opened up the way to fabulous wealth for himself and people. It flattered his pride and theirs; it gave Israel a political and social standing quite unprecedented.

There was, however, another consequence, to which Ahab paid little heed, but which roused the bitter opposition of the best element in the nation. An alliance with Tyre meant an alliance with the god of Tyre. The building of a temple to the Tyrian Baal in Samaria was a political necessity. It was inevitable. Ahab had not the least intention of renouncing the worship of Jehovah; neither he nor his people ever thought of that. They thought it was possible to worship both. The ritual of both religions was much the same, though that of Baal was more imposing; all the resources of a great civilization were taxed to make it so. Its moral demands were much less exacting than the religion of Israel. Indeed, there was a great deal in it that was grossly immoral. It frankly appealed to what was lowest and most debasing in human nature. But then, the



wealth of the nation was growing by leaps and bounds !

Now, there were two parties in Israel who saw clearly that the two religions would not mix. They were absolutely incompatible. They represented principles which were essentially and radically opposed to each other, and sooner or later one must give way to the other. The one party was Jezebel, the daughter of the priest-king of Tyre ; and the other was the prophets of Israel. Between these two there arose a fierce and deadly conflict, and at first it seemed as if Baal and Jezebel had completely triumphed. For most of the prophets were killed ; a hundred were hid in the caves of Carmel, and fed by the generosity of the steward of the king's household ; the altars of Jehovah were broken down.

But there was one prophet who had escaped the murderous hate of Jezebel, who was watching the course of events from the fastnesses of his native Gilead. There he nursed his fierce indignation, and prayed. We know nothing of his early life and training. He was without father, without mother.

He had neither beginning of days nor end of life. Like the New Testament Elijah, he was in the desert until the day of his showing unto Israel. We are told (Septuagint) that he was a native of Tishbe in Gilead; but we are no wiser for that, except that his rugged surroundings may partly account for the ruggedness of his appearance. He was as proud of his rough sheep-skin cloak as a Highlander is of his kilt. It may account, too, for the severe austerity of his character. Living on the edge of the desert the life of a hardy mountaineer, his wants were few, his tastes simple. He had no sort of sympathy with the growing passion for wealth and luxury in Samaria and the growing laxity in the morals of his countrymen.

But it is impossible to suppose that the surroundings of Elijah account for his magnificent personality. We must look deeper for the real springs of his life. We must remember his *strong, simple faith*. He could have said, as Banquo did, 'In the great hand of God I stand.' He lived as one who waited instantly to do his Lord's bidding.

‘Jehovah, before whom I stand,’ was his watchword. That, more than anything else, accounts for his splendid courage. He never feared the face of man. He stood alone against an apostate king and a subservient people. The whole trend of things was against him. The nation was drifting swiftly away from God, and he stemmed the current alone — absolutely alone. We must remember, again, his *singleness of aim*. He lived for this one thing, and gave his whole strength to it—to vindicate the character of Israel’s God and to win back a faithless people to their true allegiance. He had no plans of his own, no by-ends of his own to serve. He was ready to hazard everything for the cause.

This helps us to understand the mark he made in Israel and the place he holds in both Testaments, and especially in the Apocryphal books. No prophet is mentioned so frequently in the New Testament (Elijah is mentioned twenty-nine times, Elisha only once), and none with greater reverence. And yet the record of his life is very brief. His public career almost began

and ended in one glorious day, but the impression he made on Israel is indelible and most remarkable. And he did this by sheer force of character. He had no extraneous aids to greatness.

Such, then, was the man whom God raised up to meet this crisis in Israel. He saw more clearly than any man of his time the true issues at stake, and in his lonely desert life among the wild uplands of Gilead he brooded and prayed and formed his plans.

And this was the conclusion he came to : at all costs, king and people must be forced to a decision as between Jehovah and Baal. To serve both was absolutely impossible. The foolish nation must be made to see its folly. By the help of God he would *compel* them to see it. And so he prayed, for he was a man mighty in prayer, as subsequent events will show. '*He prayed fervently that it might not rain*' (Jas. v. 17).

And God answered his prayer. Then Elijah emerged from his mountain home, and with the suddenness of lightning appeared at the court of Ahab to announce the

meaning of the drought: 'As Jehovah, the God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.' The people shall be made to see whether they owe anything to Baal; they shall know whether Jehovah is God in Israel.

Elijah fled, as swiftly and mysteriously as he had appeared, to Cherith, a narrow wady somewhere in his native Gilead, and with a fierce joy he watched the results of his prayer. By the providence of God he was fed there during the days of famine which followed—that is the writer's obvious meaning, whether we accept a literal or a metaphorical interpretation for the word translated 'ravens.' There he remained till the little stream dwindled to a streamlet, and then became the merest trickle of water. Then he was driven to seek water and food by the streams which were fed by the Lebanons—and these would continue to flow long after the streams of Gilead were dried up. To get there, he had to pass through the outlying borders of Israel. What sights he must have seen! The pastures were withered and scorched,

the fissures gaped in the hard-baked soil, the lean cattle panted for breath. The faces of famine - stricken men and hunger - bitten children turned to look at his strange, gaunt figure as he passed. All this was in answer to his prayer, but Elijah had no pity, and he never dreamt that God felt for His starving people.

At last he came to Zarephath, and the scene outside the gate of the little city is one of the most vivid and realistic pictures in the Old Testament. A widow is gathering a couple of sticks to make a last meal for herself and her son ; but she is willing to share the little they have with this hungry stranger. Through all those days of bitter famine God provides for the widow and her son, for His mercy extends to Baal's land and to an unknown widow there. 'There were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, . . . and unto none of them was Elijah sent.' For a year or more, Elijah shared the hardships of that lowly home, and then came the sorest sorrow that can come to a widowed woman—her son, her only son, died. With bitter, reproachful

words she brought her news to Elijah, and alone in his upper chamber, where the dead boy's body lay, Elijah poured out his soul to God. His fierce, proud heart was humbled at last! This, too, was the answer to his prayer! And there were many homes like this in Israel! How long would the foolish people be stricken? How long would they harden their stubborn hearts? Month after month the drought had continued; one stroke of punishment had followed another. And the result was—*nil*. *The method of compulsion had failed!*

Elijah had another plan, and it seemed as if God approved: 'Go, show thyself unto Ahab; and I will send rain upon the earth.'

## II. THE METHOD OF WONDER

Whoso hath felt the spirit of the Highest  
Cannot confound, nor doubt Him, nor deny;  
Yea, with one voice, O world, though thou deniest,  
Stand thou on that side, for on this am I.

F. W. H. MYERS.

WE have seen how Elijah's heart was softened during those trying days in Zarephath. He was very jealous for the Lord,

the God of hosts; but even he could not look upon so much human misery and suffering without being deeply moved. He was convinced, at last, that Israel could never be driven to choose Jehovah. But he had been thinking of another plan—a swifter and more decisive and surely a more convincing proof that Jehovah was God in Israel. Jehovah had promised to send rain on the parched and thirsty land, but first there should be a public trial on a day appointed, when, in face of the assembled people, Jehovah would send *a sign from heaven*. That would be absolutely irresistible!

So, with such thoughts in his softened heart and such confidence in God, the prophet took his life in his hand and entered Israel again. Elijah's courage can best be measured by Obadiah's fears. Ahab had gone through the length and breadth of the impoverished land, seeking forage for the royal stables. He had seen with his own eyes the suffering which had followed on the heels of the famine, and he thought he knew where to lay the



blame for all this. It was more than three years since the drought commenced, more than two years since Elijah had suddenly appeared to announce the meaning and purpose of it, and now these two—king and prophet—were face to face again.

‘Is it thou, thou troubler of Israel?’

But Elijah flung back the taunt, ‘Not I, but *thou* art the troubler of Israel, thou and thy father’s house!’

It was the first bold stroke in the battle, and the victory was already certain. Ahab had found his master.

The greatest day of Elijah’s life had come, the day for which he had waited and prayed so long. The chief men of Israel were gathered together on a natural terrace of rock on the eastern slope of Mount Carmel. Below was the sun-scorched plain of Jezreel and the white, dry bed of the Kidron. Across the plain, sixteen miles away, the royal palace of Jezreel shone out in the pitiless sunlight under the slopes of Gilboa. There, on one side was the king and his court and the prophets of Baal,

four hundred and fifty of them, in their rich barbaric robes. (The four hundred prophets of the Asherah seem to have declined the contest.) And on the other side, all alone, calm and confident, was the prophet of Jehovah in his rough sheep-skin mantle, who

Wears evermore the seal of his believing  
Deep in the dark of solitary eyes.

He can stand alone for God now, just because he has been alone with God so long. He has no doubts about the issue. There is a strange directness and the courage of deep conviction in all his words that day. He flings out his challenge to the people: How long do you hobble and halt, like a man lame on both legs, first on one foot then on the other, now drawn towards Jehovah, but never quite in earnest; now towards Baal, but never quite satisfied? If Jehovah is God, follow Him straight; if Baal, follow him. But to follow both is absolutely impossible!

The people answered him not a word; but they admitted the fairness of the test

proposed, and they waited with stolid Oriental patience to see the result.

While they wait, let us try to realize the state of mind in which some of them looked on. In many, the long-continued drought had produced great searching of heart. But again, these doubts had been sternly silenced. 'These hard times cannot last for ever,' they said; 'and as for this drought, religion has nothing to do with it.' Elijah is a one-eyed enthusiast, a narrow-minded fanatic. He was brought up in the country, and loves the old ways. They were right enough for our fathers, but we have a broader outlook. Our fathers had no monopoly of goodness. The Tyrians are an educated and enlightened people; they are wealthy and prosperous; they are, moreover, very religious men. There is something to be said for their side, and something for our side too. The proper course is between the two religions; there is something good in each.'

Now, Elijah's passionate conviction was just this: the two were absolutely incompatible, and Israel must choose between

them. There are two New Testament writers, each of whom has much in common with Elijah, who teach the same truth, James the Lord's brother, and John the son of Thunder: 'Whosoever would be a friend of the world maketh himself an enemy of God.' 'If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.' Surely another prophet is long since overdue, who will set a plain alternative clearly before us! To return to our story—if Elijah's contention is true, the test he proposes is fair.

All the long morning the prophets of Baal had been calling upon their god, and Elijah had looked on in scornful silence, until, at noon, he broke out in fierce and bitter irony and mocked them. Then, at the time of the evening sacrifice, the exhausted, blood-stained prophets of Baal give way to Elijah, and as he prays the fire of God descends. There is no need to rehearse all the rest of that day's doings; but we can easily imagine the exultation which Elijah felt when he heard the shout that rent the startled air: 'Jehovah, He is God; Jehovah, He is God!'

The slaughter of the priests of Baal was a savage deed which we need not attempt to justify. These were the days of ignorance which God overlooked. But that savage act set the seal on the people's choice. The faithless king was convinced. The unaccustomed rain was the mark of God's approval.

The old enmity between king and prophet was over. Elijah was willing to be the king's courier and servant, and so he ran before the royal chariot all the sixteen miles to Jezreel. As he had been the first to oppose the king in his apostasy, so he would be the first to help him in better things. When they reached the gate of Jezreel, the night was closing in, and the rain-storm was driving inland from the Mediterranean.

It was the crowning day of Elijah's life. His cause appeared to be triumphant. Baal was helpless to save his worshippers; his prophets were murdered, his power broken. The cause of God had triumphed, and, with tumult of acclaim, the assembled thousands had publicly avowed themselves to be on Jehovah's side. Now, Elijah thought, a new era would begin! The

people would act on their conviction, and turn in penitence to God. The king would put himself at the head of a willing people, and the worship of Jehovah would be established as the national faith. A nation was to be born again in a day.

Elijah was sure of his cause, absolutely sure of the purity of his motives. He had given himself—his best and utmost—to this cause with perfect self-abandonment. He looked for complete, immediate, and certain success. He thought, like many an ardent reformer since, that his whole work was done when he had showed up a great wrong, and dragged it out into the light, and called down on it the curse of God. If it were sufficient merely to convince men that they were in the wrong, that God ought to be obeyed, and that it is to any man's advantage to obey, we should have no drink problem to-day, and greedy men would no longer grind the face of the poor.

Elijah had forgotten the force of habit and the strength of prejudice, the supineness of the masses and the weakness of Ahab. Above all, he had not reckoned on the strongest

personal force in the nation—Jezebel. She was not cowed, and she was not the woman to accept defeat without an effort.

Before the next day dawned Elijah had fled from the face of Jezebel. He was afraid (1 Kings xix. 3, R.V. margin), and had fled! He felt as King Arthur felt when he saw his realm 'reel back into the beast.' He perceived how little one man can hope to accomplish, and he gave way completely to the bitterness of disenchantment and failure. His strength was but a man's strength after all, and he had reached the limits of human endurance. He longed to die. Sorrow whispered the o'er-fraught heart, and bade it break. He could never again rise to the height of the effort which had failed. All was lost: the king was as weak as ever, and Jezebel stronger than before. Carmel had witnessed only a momentary burst of enthusiasm. He had won an empty victory, a useless triumph. Baal was worshipped still, and God Almighty defied. He had given his whole strength to the cause of God. He had maintained and defended

that cause against all denials of Him and all substitutes for Him. But the crowd which shouted his name yesterday would not lift a finger for him to-day. 'I only am left, and they seek my life to take it away.' The sign from heaven had left them unconvinced. *The method of wonder had failed.*

### III. A MORE EXCELLENT WAY

*After the fire a still small voice.* It pointed backward to Elijah's past career, and it pointed onward to one who should use no force, who should not cry nor lift up, nor let His voice be heard in the streets. Elijah's methods were tried on himself—power, force, law, Sinai; and the effects were naught. The Lord was not in the earthquake nor in the fire. Did the prophet wonder now at the obdurate king, at the besotted people, at the fickle crowd, at the mad, vindictive queen? What had he been plying them with all his days? With miracle on miracle, a gloomy demeanour, heavens of brass, famine, thirst, death, with law and force. Does he wonder at the result now, after his present experience? Or is not his wonder rather turned in upon himself? He had been enabled to sound the deeps of that conception of God which had all his life fascinated him; he had come to His chosen place, and had found that God was something different from his idea of Him, and that His highest power was not of the kind he imagined.—PROF. A. B. DAVIDSON.

It is your one-eyed men, who only see one side of a question, and give themselves



to their cause, heart and soul and strength, who are equal to such a task as Elijah accomplished in Israel. Drastic work like his is not done by methods of compromise. But it is just such men as he, men of ardent, passionate temperament, who are most liable to depression and despair when they seem to fail. One day Elijah stands on Carmel, alone, triumphant; the next day he lies down in the desert and longs to die. We find instructive parallels in the lives of Moses and John the Baptist; or, if we prefer a modern instance, think of Frederick Robertson, one day preaching to a crowded church in Brighton, the next day grovelling on his study floor.

It is only to the noblest natures that such dejection is possible. Elijah was deeply concerned for the public weal and for the honour of God—very jealous for Jehovah. If he had been living for his own ends, he would have been unconcerned.

And yet, such despondency was wrong. It was unjust to God. Elijah thought, for a moment, that God had forsaken His own cause. That was the thought which stung

and goaded him : Did God care? Patriarch, prophet, and psalmist are sometimes harassed by the same disheartening doubt: 'Can the Judge of all the earth do wrong?' 'How long, O Lord?' 'I have been very jealous for Jehovah,' as if God Himself cared less than His servant.

It was unjust to himself. He thought he had failed utterly. His eyes were fastened, as by some spell, on his failures. He thought he was alone; yet in the very palace was one who had befriended him and his cause, who feared the Lord greatly from his youth. There is that in the experience of every Christian worker which will interpret Elijah's fear. Think of Paul staggered and appalled at the wickedness of Corinth. His chances of success were very small. His life was in danger, and there were many adversaries. In a vision of the night the Lord stood by him, and spoke words of comfort to his lonely soul: 'Be not afraid, . . . for I am with thee; and no man shall set on thee to harm thee; for I have much people in this city' (Acts xviii. 9, 10).

The gracious Lord showed Elijah that he had not laboured in vain nor spent his strength for naught. He

Show'd him a remnant barr'd from the betrayal,  
Close in His Carmel, where the caves are dim;  
So many knees that had not bowed to Baal,  
So many lips that had not kissèd him.

As Frederick Robertson puts it: 'Elijah's apparent success was in the shouts of Mount Carmel; his real success was in the unostentatious, unsurmised obedience of the seven thousand who had taken his God for their God.'

Elijah's despondency was unjust to the past. 'I am not better than my fathers!' I have failed, so did they! Why labour any longer? Why tax the over-wearied brain? Why continue the unavailing struggle? Is it worth while to toil like this? Are those for whom I labour worth it all? So we repine, so we despond. And yet the kingdom of God is coming amongst us, and the day of the Lord draws nigh.

God dealt very tenderly with Elijah. He did not address to him one reproachful word,

for he could not have borne it then. 'He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust.' First, He gave His servant rest and food. He had fled by night from the wrath of Jezebel, and wandered all day in the glaring desert heat. When silence and solitude had rested his overwrought nerves, when his jaded body was restored and his mind had recovered its balance, God would show him how much had been accomplished and how much yet remained to be done.

And so, in the strength of the food which God provided, Elijah set his face towards Horeb, the mount of God. Man had failed him: he would make very sure of God. Here, if anywhere, Jehovah would reveal Himself to His servant. Here, surely, the God of vengeance would make known to him some plan by which the power of Jezebel could be broken, and king and people could be shaken out of their apathy and indifference. He would stand in the very place where Moses stood when the mountain burned with fire! It is not unlikely that the cave in which Elijah 'lodged'

was the very 'cleft' in which God had hidden Moses when He covered him with the shadow of His hand and caused His goodness to pass before him (Ex. xxxiii. 22).

The savage grandeur of the place was quite in keeping with his present mood. He was shut in by granite peaks which pierced into the lonely sky and which formed a sort of natural sanctuary. It was the very place of terrors, and the scene is described in some of the sublimest words of the Old Testament. Again, the Lord passed by.

Lo, He goeth by me, and I know Him not :  
He passeth on also, but I perceive Him not (Job ix. 11).

A sudden and violent storm arose. The wind bellowed through the granite gorges and gullies, the few bare trees were torn from their roots, huge masses of rock were hurled down the precipitous cliffs. Elijah looked out upon it all, defiant, exultant. It left him unmoved. Then the solid earth shook and rocked beneath him, as if Nature saw God and trembled; but it merely fed

the flame of the prophet's wrath. A thunderstorm followed. Lurid lightning played about those lonely peaks, and the thunder reverberated among the rocky fastnesses. 'For Elijah's sake, God almost re-enacted the terrors of Sinai' (A. B. Davidson). It was Sinai over again, and God was not in it all. It left the prophet still unmoved.

Then, in the awful silence, when the storm suddenly ceased, there came 'a sound of gentle stillness' (R.V. margin), a still small voice, and 'when Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle.' As he listened, he heard again the same pointed question which had been put to him when first he came to that sacred place: 'What doest thou here, Elijah?' God sometimes forces us to put our motives into plain words; it is the first step towards understanding their real meaning. Conceal it from himself as he would, after all excuses had been made, it was plain that Elijah had fled from the post of duty. He had thought his work was finished when it was barely begun.

But it concerns us most of all to know,

not the grandeur of this scene, but its real meaning. What is the truth at the back of this story, and how shall we translate it into plain words? What is the real meaning of these experiences? It seems to me that Elijah gained, through them, three things. First, he gained *new views of God*. The prophet had made a mistake. He supposed that the fire of Carmel was the only symbol by which God could make Himself known, that earthquake and thunder and storms were the expression of His essential nature. Elijah had tried to bend the stubborn wills of men by methods of force. He never thought of any other way. He magnified God's strictness with a zeal He would not own. But in the solitude and silence of Horeb, he learned the gentleness of God. In that same place the truth was taught to Moses: that Jehovah is 'full of compassion and gracious, slow to anger and plenteous in mercy and truth.' His fitting symbol was the still small voice. Well did a later psalmist say: 'Thy gentleness hath made me great.'

He gained, in the second place, *new*

*views of his work.* ‘What doest thou *here?*’ The cruelty of Jezebel, the apostasy of Israel, the failure of past efforts, the uncertainty of the future—none of these, nor all of them together, were sufficient to justify Elijah in abandoning his duty. God gave His servant a glimpse of the work yet to be done. He had other instruments and larger purposes than Elijah was aware of. Syria and its king were among them, and a dashing cavalry officer in Ahab’s army—a rough, unscrupulous fellow, yet he was to be used for God’s ends. The cruelty of Hazael and the bloodier cruelties of Jehu would make an end of Baalism once for all. Elijah must take these rough men as he found them and make the best of them, directing and controlling their energies, as far as possible, in the interests of the kingdom of God. Further, God had made provision for the permanence of Elijah’s work. A young farmer in the Jordan valley—Elisha by name—is already prepared to take his place.

Above all, Elijah learned at Horeb *a new method of appeal.* The method of coercion



had failed, the method of wonder had failed. There was a better way. Force, threats, denunciations will never avail. Men cannot be frightened into goodness. But where thunder-and-lightning methods have failed, the gradual, silent, pervasive influence of the faithful seven thousand may succeed. The kingdom of God would advance, not only by great catastrophes and crises, such as Carmel represents, but by quiet human agencies, by patient, unseen work in the schools of the prophets. It is significant that Elijah never again appears in public except on two occasions. All his remaining years were spent in the service of his God and of his country, not in the same dramatic and conspicuous way, but quietly, steadily, unobtrusively. It seems as if every servant of God must learn this truth anew through his own bitter experience—that the most effective appeal is that of the still small voice, addressed to man's reason and conscience and will. 'Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.'

## IV IN NABOTH'S VINEYARD

If weakness may excuse,  
What murtherer, what traitor, parricide,  
Incestuous, sacrilegious, but may plead it?  
All wickedness is weakness.

MILTON, *Samson Agonistes*.

AHAB has received scant justice at the hands of the biblical historians, and the popular estimate of his character is scarcely fair. We never think of him except as contrasted with Elijah, or as dominated by the fiendish Jezebel. Yet he had his good points. He was a courageous soldier, a capable ruler, a far-seeing statesman. He never intended to renounce the worship of Jehovah—the names of his children are sufficient evidence of that. He thought it was possible to serve Jehovah *and* Baal, and perhaps those who denounce him most are not entirely guiltless of trying to serve two masters. If it had not been for the influence of his wife, he would have been a better man after what took place on Mount Carmel. But that was seven years ago, and in the meantime he had twice defeated a dangerous enemy and rolled back the tide

of foreign invasion. He had won for his kingdom peace and prosperity, and for himself considerable wealth. He was free now to establish his own house, to adorn his beautiful palace in Samaria and his country house in Jezreel, eight miles away.

Every year he made some improvement in his beautiful grounds; but there was one thing which interfered with the completion of his schemes. A neighbour in Jezreel—a poor man comparatively—owned a strip of land which ran like a tongue into the palace grounds. Now, Ahab badly wanted this bit of land for a kitchen garden! He had long looked wistfully over the fence, and at length he attempted to negotiate a purchase. He offered a fair price in exchange, but Naboth was not inclined to part with the family property. He had religious scruples: ‘The Lord forbid that I should give thee the inheritance of my fathers!’

The refusal, perhaps, was not so courteous as it should have been; more than likely, his words were rough and surly, for the yeomen of Israel were a sturdy and

independent race. And Ahab, king as he was, had conscientious scruples about forcing a sale. But because he was thwarted, he was more eager than ever to gain that plot of land. Because he was balked, it became to him an object of consuming desire—as if that tongue of land were the one thing in the world worth striving for. And, like a spoilt and petulant child, he sulked in his palace and refused to eat. If he could not get his own way, the zest of life was gone! But I am not concerned to tell an interesting story. The meaning of it is the main thing. If we miss that, we miss everything. Notice *the danger of undisciplined desire*. This chapter enforces, in concrete form, the exhortation of our Lord, ‘Take heed and beware of covetousness.’ It was a subject on which He had a great deal to say, and His warning was never more needed than now. This passion for getting, this longing for a little more than we have, this worship of Mammon—it is not peculiar to millionaires. Poor men sometimes forget that a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.

No sin is more incompatible than covetousness with the love of God and man. We are apt to call it enterprise or thrift; but conscience has a way of calling sins by their right names. See what a long list of warning examples we have in Lot and Achan, Ahab, Gehazi and Naaman, Judas and Ananias! And see what such sin grows to! A man will move heaven and earth to gain some trifling thing. His desire for that will blind him to the true proportions of all besides.

If Ahab had scruples, Jezebel had none; and the king was like clay in her hands. She came of a heathen stock, ferocious in character, swift in decision. Her taunts cut Ahab to the quick. '*You* a king! Give me your signet-ring; *I* will give you the vineyard of Naboth!' Ahab weakly yielded, and soothed his conscience by thinking that now the matter was out of his hands. Whatever others might do, they would do on their own responsibility. He had nothing more to do with it. If Naboth's bit of land came into his possession, he would be glad enough to have it. He would

make no inquiries, but it would be none of his doing! Notice *the peril of self-deception*. There is many a man who lacks the pluck to do a wrong thing himself, but is willing to acquiesce if others do it. He is willing enough to reap the benefits of wrong-doing, and to shirk his share of the responsibility. It is notorious that a committee or a limited company will do what an individual would shrink from doing, and each member tries to thrust the responsibility for it on others. A professional man will sometimes do, according to professional etiquette, what he would scorn to do as an individual. A tradesman, otherwise honest, will stoop to the tricks of the trade. How easy it is to delude oneself by thinking that, because there is no actual personal wrong-doing, there is therefore no responsibility. Ahab thought this thing had been taken out of his hands. Yet he was responsible, and he knew it. The fiction by which he deceived himself was exposed in a moment by the short, sharp words of Elijah.

But notice the amazing cleverness of Jezebel's scheme. 'When a wicked thing is

cleverly done, half the world is disposed to condone its wickedness.' Many a sinner deceives his own soul by calling a wicked thing smart. But when conscience wakes, it calls our sins by their right names!

In this case, all the legal proprieties were observed. A letter was written in Ahab's name, sealed with the royal seal. Nobody suspected Jezebel's part in the affair, except a few subservient nobles who could be trusted to keep their secret. A public fast was proclaimed, as if the little town were under the ban of God's displeasure. Then, when public expectation had been raised, a properly constituted court met to find out the culprit. Two lying witnesses—such can always be bought for gold in the East—swore to a lie, a lie all the blacker for the grain of truth that was in it. It was suggested above that there may have been a touch of churlishness in Naboth's refusal of the vineyard. This was exaggerated into an act of disloyalty to the throne. Naboth had cursed God and the king, and after a trial, in which all the legal forms were strictly observed, he was found guilty of treason.

His lands were forfeited and lapsed to the Crown. That was the law! And they were there to administer it! Of course, Jezebel was clear; the king was in ignorance of the whole affair. Everything was perfectly straightforward. Word was sent to the palace, 'Naboth is stoned, and is dead.'

It is not difficult to reconstruct the conversation which ensued: 'That churl Naboth, who refused to sell his little vineyard, has been found guilty of treason. He and his sons are dead, and the vineyard is yours—legally and inalienably yours—and *yours for nothing!*' It was very clever! Ahab was willing to pay a fair price, but he saved money on that transaction. He got that vineyard cheap! But did he? It is possible to buy a thing at the lowest market-price, and yet pay very dear for it! That which a man gets by tampering with his own conscience is dear, whatever the selling-price. The money-price one pays for a thing is not always the measure of what it costs. Here is a man who is congratulating himself on a particularly smart bargain; but what if he has paid down for it his own



good name and his peace of mind and the welfare of his family! Is it worth the price? And whether a man gain a kitchen garden or the whole world, what does it profit him if he lose his own soul?

So Ahab rose up to go down to his vineyard. He rode in state the journey of eight miles to Jezreel. Two young cavalry officers rode behind. One of them, Jehu, had good reason afterwards to remember all that happened that fateful day! All the way Ahab was congratulating himself that he had such a clever wife, and thinking what a pleasure this would be to his children afterwards! He could not entirely silence his misgivings. He could not forget that to gain his ends he had wronged a true-hearted man, a neighbour and a subject. 'Wronged' was the word which his lips formed. The word in his thoughts was 'killed.' Conscience *will* call things by their right names! But he told himself, if he had done a shady thing, or allowed it to be done, it was really in the interests of his wife and family. Self-deceit will carry us great lengths!

How many a rogue has silenced his conscience 'in the interests of his family'!

As Ahab walked through his new garden he noticed a figure coming towards him which he speedily recognized, though, as far as we know, they had only met twice before, and the last time was seven years ago. Now, as before, Elijah appeared suddenly, unexpectedly, as if he had risen from the grave. In short, sharp, pungent words he brushed aside the flimsy excuses with which Ahab had striven to hide his sin from himself. Ahab's conscience smote him before the man of God spoke a word, and the cry burst from him, half in anger, half in anguish: 'Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?' He had killed and taken possession, and what better was he? The vineyard he got for nothing was bought at the price of Naboth's blood. It must be repaid at the price of his own!

But we must end this story as the Scripture does. There is no reason to doubt the genuineness of Ahab's repentance—though we should have thought better of him if he had repented before he saw Elijah.

It is never too late to repent—never in this life. Ahab found, like many a penitent sinner since, that the mercy of God was greater than all his sins. ‘There is forgiveness with Thee, that Thou mayest be feared.’

## THREE SERMONS

### I

#### JEHOVAH THE SHEPHERD AND HOST

##### PSALM XXIII

*[From a verbatim report.]*

THIS psalm of few words falls upon the hearts of Christian people like the quiet dew. I do not think there is any portion of Scripture—not even the fourteenth chapter of St. John—which has been so read into the experiences of God's people as the words of this psalm. Probably this is the first passage of Scripture which any of us learned in childhood; the old folks like this psalm above all psalms; through all the years between, its music sings itself into our hearts; and if one might choose, these are the last words that I should like to hear in this life. They are very simple

words, and to analyse them as one would analyse the close-knit sentences of Paul, for example, would be to spoil them utterly. They regain freshness and power, however, if without dwelling unduly on the details, I can help you to realize and make vivid the picture which was before the Psalmist's mind as he wrote these words, for most of the Old Testament writers wrote and thought in pictures.

We must put ourselves at the Psalmist's standpoint if we would appreciate the aptness and the appropriateness of the exquisite figure that he uses as his name for God. I think it is doubtful whether David wrote this psalm—probably not ; but whoever wrote it was without any doubt a shepherd, and he lived in a country where the shepherd was a familiar and well-known figure. But when you think about a shepherd, you must put away from your mind all your associations with that word, and you must look on a landscape totally different from ours. We are accustomed to see sheep penned up in fenced fields. In Judæa there is no such thing as a fence or a wall. The whole landscape is

one sea of rolling hills, where the grass is green and fresh for a few weeks after the annual rains, and the rest of the year is bare, lonely, boundless desert. And in that landscape there is one figure—the bronzed, weather-beaten, keen-eyed shepherd. His is a very lonely life, full of danger and hazard, and the timid creatures of his flock are his only companions. There grows up a sympathy between them which we can scarcely understand. The Eastern shepherd does not value his sheep as we do, simply for their market value. He learns to know them and to love them; he calls them by their name, cares for each; for this man is no hireling husbandman. The sheep are his own, and he values them by the sacrifices he has made for them at the risk of life and limb. His daily business is to find pasture for them: he knows every nook and corner of the hilly country. The shepherd knows where the quiet watercourses run, and where the fresh green grass grows, where safest rest can be found; and the sheep learn from experience to follow his guidance, for if the way is dreary enough at times, they learn to

know that there are green pastures and quiet waters at the end.

Sometimes the valleys are cut into deep dark gorges, which show like a black object on the landscape, their precipitous sides clothed with low scrub and undergrowth ; and as one enters such a ravine, and passes out of the fierce glare of the sun, one is almost blinded by the darkness. A place of terror for the sheep, often and often for them a valley of the shadow of death ; for here are the lairs and hiding places of the fierce beasts of prey, and the precarious foothold in the darkness adds to the unknown terrors of the place. The shepherd walks on at the head of his flock, and every now and then he strikes his staff on the rocky bottom of the ravine. You can hear that sound a mile away, and the frightened sheep huddle together and know that he is there. They know that in his hand is the stout club which would brain any beast of prey, so they take comfort from his rod and staff. The application of all that is too obvious to need any lengthy reference. But what more beautiful simile can you have for God ? What more

apt and perfect example of His guardianship and guidance, His tenderness and care, His watchful providence? If God is such a Shepherd, I need not worry about the future. If I am ailing and weak, He restoreth my soul, or 'my life.' If He is such a God, I shall not walk with aimless feet upon paths that lead nowhere in particular: He guideth me in paths of righteousness, in right paths. And whatever valley of deep darkness I am called upon to enter, whether of temptation or loneliness or sorrow, or some heavy responsibility, or the last of all, the valley of the shadow of death, He is there. He is with me. At least, all this is true if we can use the Psalmist's personal pronouns. The Lord is *my* Shepherd: He guideth *me*. Unless you can say that, that beautiful figure for God means nothing to you. Whatever this psalm means, it is a psalm of personal religion. If God is yours by deliberate choice, by the glad and willing surrender of yourself to Him, and you are His, then you may say, as the Psalmist did, The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: He



leadeth me beside waters of rest. He restoreth my life: He guideth me in right paths for His Name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of deep darkness, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me.

Many commentators treat the psalm as if it were here broken in two; as if the figure of a shepherd were dismissed, and there were substituted for it the figure of a king, who invites us to his royal table and becomes our gracious host. But to do that seems to me to miss the chief beauty of the Psalmist's figure, and to spoil everything. You introduce an incongruous element into the picture. Keep that figure of the shepherd still before your eyes. A lonely figure in that wild, mountainous, desert landscape, standing now beside his rough, rude shepherd's tent. Men grow very sharp-sighted in the desert. You read in the papers how men can see long distances on the veldt. They grow very keen-eyed, and even an inconspicuous object is seen a long way off. Now if you look

on this landscape attentively you will see another figure far back on the hillside yonder. He is running in hot haste, and his terrified eyes have seen the only human habitation that is visible—the shepherd's tent. He is making for that with quick, panting breath, and there follows him the avenger of blood. Perhaps inadvertently, perhaps in the heat of passion, he has taken the life of one of the desert tribesmen.

Now the law of the desert,—the only law of that lawless place, is this—‘blood for blood; life for life.’ It is a law that knows no exceptions and no relenting. The relations of the slain man are bound in honour to avenge his death. Revenge becomes a sacred duty. Taken, the slayer expects no mercy, and they will never relent. There is no escape. But there is this, there is at least a respite. That stern desert law has just this one element of mercy in it. If the fugitive can reach a human dwelling-place, he is safe for a time at least. If he can only stretch out his hand and touch the tent rope, though

he has not breath to say what he wants, he knows very well that he is safe. He can claim shelter and hospitality, and it will not be denied him. Whatever his character, whatever his past, he will be furnished and fed and no questions will be asked. His host immediately becomes responsible for his safety, and the avengers will respect the compact. The man becomes what is called 'The guest of God.' For two nights and the day between—more if he asks for it—the man is absolutely safe. It would be one of the most shocking things in the East for a man to refuse hospitality. His pursuers may come to the very door of the tent, but they dare not enter in to harm him. In the very presence of his foes he is safe. Now such a panting fugitive had fled to the shepherd's tent: he was sure of a welcome rest, of shelter and food. 'Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies.' I want to dwell more particularly on this part of the psalm, because perhaps this figure is least familiar to us. It is a picture of human life. What is man but a fugitive? Who

is there among us that has no foe? the hot breath of the pursuer upon his cheek? Who is there that does not know that hunted, haunted feeling, as if close upon his heels there were some relentless pursuer?

Let me mention one or two of our pursuers. There is the sin of yesterday; the memories of the past that will not sleep; the cutting word that cannot be unspoken; the uncharitable judgement which wronged a brother and added to a load that was heavy enough before. Sins against God and His long-suffering grace. You know how they haunt us and follow us: how they track us every step of the way.

Let me mention another—there is the temptation of to-day. We have so often given way before it that we almost dread its very approach. We are free from it at the present, for a moment, but in an hour you may hear its mocking tone again: it always seems to be upon your track—the temptation that you have fought against and striven against with all the strength that you possess.

And another one—there is the fear for to-morrow—the fear of want; do you not know how it catches your breath sometimes? You are living right up to your income, and you must, for it is small enough, and your work puts a strain upon your energies, and you rather like it and enjoy it—but sometimes a thought comes, What if your strength should give out? If you are put aside by some untoward accident, what would happen to those depending upon you? And it takes the colour out of your cheek. Perhaps it is not so easy as it seems for you to say, ‘I shall not want.’ You have prospered so far, and you are very thankful; but you know very well there are envious rivals who would be glad to see you trip, and who would be quick to profit by your mistakes, and it is not quite so easy perhaps to say, ‘I will fear no evil.’

There is the fear of death. Some of you are thinking that I have no right to say that you are afraid to die! Are you not? Then how is it that you can never bring yourself to say that ugly word? You talk to your friend, and you tell him, ‘I have been

getting insured in case—in case—anything should happen.’ The sin of yesterday, the temptation of to-day, the fears for to-morrow—these are the sleuth-hounds that follow us. These are the real enemies of our life. But, friends, if there is any truth in this exquisite figure of the Psalmist’s, there is a refuge and a shelter from the worst of them all. ‘God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in time of trouble.’ In one of our hymns, which I like to sing, we say—

Secure I am, if Thou art mine ;  
And lo ! from sin, and grief, and shame,  
I hide me, Jesus, in Thy name.

But if there is any truth at all in this psalm, God is not only our Good Shepherd—that means a great deal; it means provision for us and guidance for us—but God becomes our gracious Host, and His honour is pledged to our protection. ‘In the presence of mine enemies Thou preparest a table before me.’ We are honoured guests in His home. And there is one more touch which completes the picture. I have read somewhere of a man who lived

in a very beautiful home, and one would have thought that he had every comfort in this life,—as indeed he had,—and a friend of his was walking through his grounds one day. ‘You have everything that one could wish,’ he said; and the reply was, ‘Yes, but there is just one thing missing.’ ‘What is that?’ asked his friend. ‘Permanence: it won’t last!’ The law of the desert provided hospitality and shelter for two nights and the day between: anything more was of grace. But this, our rest, is permanent. ‘I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever,’ for *length of days*. Not only for a moment, that we may escape again to find our pursuers close upon our heels. ‘I will dwell in the house of the Lord for length of days.’ No foe need frighten us now: we can turn round and face our pursuers, and shall find them to be only God’s bright-faced angels, both of them; for only ‘*goodness* and *mercy* shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for length of days.’ The Psalmist was, of course, thinking of this life. The last stroke of this picture

was by another hand. You will find it in the Book of Revelation, chapter vii. and verse 15, but it is only in the Revised Version that you see the obvious reference to this psalm. I will read it: 'He that sitteth on the throne shall spread His tent over them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more. Neither shall the sun strike upon them, nor any heat: for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall be their Shepherd, and shall guide them unto fountains of waters of life: and God shall wipe away every tear from their eyes.'



## II

### VICTORY AND FAITH

Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.—JOHN xvi. 33.

This is the victory that hath overcome the world, even our faith.—1 JOHN v. 4.

*[From a verbatim report.]*

YOU may know the company that a man keeps by his vocabulary. Most people, especially men of any strength of character, have a few favourite words, and anybody living with them catches these through their speech. It was so with Jesus; the prominent words in these two texts were very often on His lips, and John seems to have caught them. The 'world,'—that word occurs forty times in these few chapters; more than one hundred times in John's Gospel and the Epistle: 'overcometh,' 'victory.' None of the apostles has had more injustice done to him than John has by the

painters. You always see him represented with something like a woman's look on his face, as if gentleness and tenderness were preponderant in his nature. That is not my idea of John: if John was anything he was a fighter, he was not called the 'Son of Thunder' for nothing. And this word 'overcometh' was one of his favourite words. 'Faith,' perhaps, is a word more characteristic of Paul. Indeed this is the only occasion in all John's writings where we find it at all, but the whole of John's writings are simply saturated with the idea that it represents. That idea he expresses by the word 'belief.'

Now if you can keep these three prominent words before your mind—the 'world,' 'overcometh,' 'faith'—I think we can get at the thought at the back of these two texts. It seems to be this, that for all of us life is a fight, a struggle for mastery. Willing or unwilling, we must fight; and the measure of our worth is the answer to this question—What is it we are fighting for? And I want to ask you—What are you giving your strength to? Are you enlisted in God's great war-

fare in this world, or are you fighting on the other side, satisfied with what the world has to offer? Can you plant your foot on the animal inside you and make it keep its place, or have you been overcome by the world, so that you bow down to its customs and acknowledge its authority?

Perhaps of all words in the New Testament that word is the most difficult to define—the world. It is one of the commonest words in the New Testament, and the Scripture says some very plain things about it. As John tells us in this very Epistle, chapter ii. verse 15: ‘Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.’ And so James tells us, ‘Whosoever therefore would be a friend of the world maketh himself an enemy of God,’ chapter iv. verse 4. And so Paul, with his eyes upon the cross of Christ: ‘I am crucified to the world,’ so complete and absolute is his separation from it.

Whatever that word ‘world’ may mean—and I am not saying at present what it does mean—it is the subject of most

solemn and frequent warnings in the Word of God, and the New Testament speaks of it with an emphasis that cannot be mistaken; it is evidently of supreme importance that we should have no false thoughts or hopes or fears about it. I do not know that it is possible to define it—a dictionary would not be of the least use. Perhaps every one's conscience will define it quite sufficiently; but if one could put it into a sentence it would have to be something like this: The world is the sum total of those things which make us forget God; those things which make for the destruction of the highest life in us. That is the world. It is rather vague, but I do not know how you can improve upon it.

I once heard Professor Drummond say that 'the line which divides the Church from the world in our time is like the Equator—an imaginary line'; and that was not only a smart saying, but a true one; for the same act may be in one man an indication of worldliness and to another man may be a means of grace. The very same surroundings

may be to one man a channel of divine influence, and to another the embodiment of worldliness. Worldliness does not consist in any particular act or set of acts or habits; it is rather a temperament, a spirit, an attitude towards things. Not so much what we do, but how we do it. Here are two men: they work in the same office, do the same kind of work, have the same wages; and one man is a worldling who starves his soul, a mere grub of a man; and the other finds in the lowliest task a means of glorifying God and helping his fellows, and his work is both a discipline and a joy.

Let me illustrate it again: perhaps the young men will appreciate the truth from this point of view. Take one's attitude towards such a thing as sport or exercise. There are men who take exercise in a reasonable, regular, and timely way, and they keep body and soul in the pink of condition, and by that exercise or sport, whatever it is, their energies are renewed and strengthened, and they gain an increasing efficiency for the real work of life. The

man who uses sport like that is the better for it, and that sport becomes a means of grace, and God's blessing rests on it. Now here is another man who lives for it, who grudges time that is given to anything else, who indulges in his favourite sport to the very point of exhaustion; he cannot talk about anything else, nor read about anything else, and he comes back to the real battle of life spent and wearied and unfit for anything. The way in which these two men use sport or exercise, and the attitude they take towards it, shows perhaps better than anything else the character of the two men. Now if you will substitute for sport, the world; it is possible to use the world and make it a means of grace: as Paul puts it, 'to use the world, as not abusing it.' This life of ours is a training-ground, and we can so use it as to strengthen and train our faculties for the higher service of God and man; one who does that conquers the world, he is the victor, he overcomes the world; but a man who uses the world for himself alone, without a thought of anything or anybody beyond it—well, he will

probably succeed, as people reckon success ; he may gain the whole world and lose his own self. He is no use to God or to his fellow men.

May I try again? What is a window for in a house? It is to look through, and you can look out on the face of nature and see the blue sky and the green fields and all the beautiful things that God has made. But it is possible that your sight should stop at the glass ; it is so prettily coloured and figured that you do not see anything beyond it. You do not look through it, you look at it. Now the world to some people takes exactly the place of that glass—instead of looking through it, and instead of making the world enable them to see God and the eternal things, their gaze is fixed on it. They think of it for its own sake ; the world has conquered them.

Now all that becomes plainer, I think, when you look at the first of these texts. That this is the meaning of worldliness is confirmed by what Jesus says in this sentence : ‘Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.’ One does not like to

attempt to change such words as those, but a better translation might, I am sure, be made. The word that is translated here 'Be of good cheer,' as Jesus says it, was one word, and we have one word in English that would exactly express it if you put an exclamation mark at the back of it, and then put it this way: 'Courage! I have overcome the world.' It was a very strange thing to say just then. To all appearance He was overcome. He had not made much of the world, according to the usual standards. He had been poor all His life. He had hoped to win men to goodness and truth; He had put His best into the attempt, and for His reward He had gained misunderstanding and rejection and solitude; and at the very moment He was speaking this sentence the men who ought to have been His best helpers were plotting His murder. He was only thirty-three, and there was much to be done, and I have no doubt wisecracks of that day read across His life—failure. But that judgement has not been confirmed, and that is not what you believe. There is not one person in this congregation who believes that Christ's life



was a failure; and yet, from a worldly point of view, it was all that. If you had to choose between the scribes who murdered Him and the Man who was their victim, I know which you would choose. You would rather stand in Christ's place than in theirs. And in what seemed to be the very hour of His defeat, in the blackest hour of His life, just before Gethsemane, this is what He said to them, 'Courage! I have overcome the world'; and with His last breath He said, 'It is finished,' and there was a ring of triumph in the words. And that word seems to have taught John how to estimate success and failure in life, victory and defeat.

Have you been the successful man you hoped to be? Be careful lest you gain the whole world and lose your own self. You may gain a great deal that the world cares for and strives for, and yet the real self of you be cowed and beaten in the end. And there is many a man following to-day in the footsteps of Christ, a poor man, and he might have been 'better off,' the world says, if he had been less scrupulous; and other people sum up his life and take you to him

and say, 'He is a failure.' But that man can say in his heart of hearts, 'I have overcome the world,' and can share Christ's dominion through endless ages. He has not made much out of the world; he has not got the most out of it, as people say; but he has made it do this at any rate—he has made the world help him to see God and be a man. He has made it minister to him and to the best and highest things in him. He has overcome the world. This is how it was in Christ's life, wasn't it? He had a sorry time; He suffered much; but He was made perfect through suffering. He came to an untimely death; but His Cross became a throne. He failed, the world said; but His failure was the divinest success. He never yielded to the world's allurements, and He was never bullied by its threats, and neither the one nor the other ever was able to shake his calm trust in God and things unseen. He never strove for the world's prizes, nor sought its approval; but to-day He is King of men, and this is the message He sends to us, 'Courage! Courage! I have overcome the world.'

Now I daresay it has seemed to you sometimes that there is something irrelevant in this sentence. Christ overcame: quite so. So much the better for Him, but what has that to do with me? What possible difference can it make to me, and how can it affect me? And where is the logic of asking me to take courage because He overcame the world? In this way—that His victory was the guarantee and assurance of ours. It was no private victory for Himself alone; it was not merely as an example to us that He overcame the world. If His example had been all, that would not have been much encouragement; it would have been rather a mockery to us; as if some weak, puny man were to go to Sandow, and he were to do one of his great feats of strength, and then ask the weak man to do the same, and in reply to his protest were to say, ‘See, it can be done,’ and then leave it to him to do or attempt as best he might. If example were all, it would not help us much to know that Christ had overcome. But His victory is our triumph. We are more than

conquerors in Him that loved us. If you look at the context of these words, in the very sentence before the text you read this, 'In the world ye shall have tribulation; in Me ye shall have peace.' Yes, and victory. His power may dwell in us, His life in ours; and the fight that we engage in is His, and He sends no man to this warfare in his own strength. He is willing to put His own spirit into us,—victorious, triumphant,—so that we can say, as Paul did, 'Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory,'—not because of anything in us,— 'Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.' The real translation is like the words in the text, 'He giveth us the victory *in* our Lord Jesus Christ.' This is the victory which overcometh the world, our faith. And what is faith but the bond which unites us to Him and Him to us?—the door by which the vitality and strength of one passes into another. What is faith, if not this—the bond which joins us to Christ? If I have never made it plain before, I should dearly like to make it plain to-night, that you will never win in this

fight unless you are Christ's. Never! And you know very well that I do not say that from any professional motive, and because it is my duty to say it. I say it because I have found it so myself. If you want to live a good life, if you want to overcome the world, to make a man of yourself, you will never do it in your own strength; never! never! but in Him. And if up to this moment you have never by faith given yourself to Him, and if you cannot feel now that you belong to Him, body and soul, that you are His and altogether His, let this be the moment when, by your own solemn act before God, you give your life to Him. In one shape or another I have asked you to do that over and over again. There will be no success in life in any true sense until you are Christ's and He is yours. 'This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.'

### III

#### WORDS ON WHEELS: A SERMON TO YOUNG PEOPLE

A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in baskets of silver.—PROV. xxv. 11.

*[From a verbatim report.]*

IN London there is a beautiful jeweller's shop, perhaps the finest jeweller's shop in the whole world—Mappin & Webb's—and that is where I found this text. Right in the middle of the window there was a silver basket, all made of silver filigree work, and piled up in this basket were a number of oranges. When I saw this beautiful thing I said to myself, 'I have seen something about that,' but I could not remember where just then, and I kept on thinking, Where have I seen something about apples of gold in baskets of silver? So when I got home I looked up a concordance, and found it in this verse; but you know, I always like to look in the

margin of my Bible—you will find some of the most interesting things in the margin sometimes—and I found this: instead of saying a ‘word fitly spoken,’ it says a ‘word upon wheels.’ I thought, Well, that is something wonderful; and it made me think, What is a word upon wheels? and how is that like apples of gold in baskets of silver? I knew that silver basket I had seen was a very beautiful and graceful thing; and I said to myself, Whatever words upon wheels are, they are like that. And just as I sat back in my study chair, I heard ringing of bells and laughing outside, and upon looking through the window I saw in the street below three boys coming round the corner on their bicycles—three boys on wheels; and they came along in such an easy manner and with such a graceful and easy motion, that I said, ‘That is what those words mean.’ Words on wheels are words spoken in an easy and graceful and beautiful manner.

When you go away for your holidays, and you go to the railway station, especially if it is a trip, you will see the porters

in the station almost distracted till they hardly know what to do with themselves; and one of them will get hold of a big trunk or bag and pull it along, and there it goes crunching, and scratching, and rattling till it sets all our teeth on edge. But by and by he gets a trunk or package that he cannot move—that is too heavy to be dragged. What does he do then? He goes and fetches a little truck; and on this he piles a big trunk, and a big box, and a big bag, and a number of smaller bundles, and then, though he could not move even one box without great difficulty whilst it was on the ground, now when he has put it on wheels, what a difference it makes! How smoothly and easily it goes!

If you lived in the country, and you saw men chopping down those huge trees, you would wonder how they were going to move them. You might get half a dozen horses and yoke them on to this great trunk, and they could not drag it along. No, but they get a winch, by which they lift it up and put it on wheels, and then a pair of horses will drag it quite easily. Haven't



you noticed at the spring cleaning time at home that the beds and the piano and all the heaviest pieces of furniture are on wheels—castors, you call them? If they were not they would tear all the carpets as they were moved along.

Do you know, there are words just like that. There are some words that scratch and tear and crush and rip, and there are some words that go as smoothly and gently and easily as if you had put them on wheels. They go along without any effort whatever. Now I want to tell you some kinds of words that go upon wheels, and to ask you to use these words and no others. There are some words, as you know, that hurt and make you ‘put your back up,’ as we say; and there are other words that go quite smoothly. These words are like those apples of gold in baskets of silver; they are graceful and beautiful and precious, and the first one which I want to talk to you about is the Gentle word.

The Gentle word is a word that goes on wheels. When somebody speaks very harshly to you, you know what it feels like,

and you want to answer back just as roughly. What did we read in our first lesson this morning? 'A grievous word stirreth up anger' (that is the way to pick a quarrel) 'but a soft answer turneth away wrath.' Most of us have tried the first way, but I think if you make up your minds to speak gently, a quarrel will very soon be over. It is when people answer back just as they are spoken to—roughly, it is then that a quarrel begins. Speak always as gently as you can.

There was once a man who lived near to my home. He was a carter, and he used to come every week to Manchester over the hills by Marsden and Saddleworth. He used to start about five o'clock in the morning, and just about that time he would go to the mill and yoke his horses and make all ready to start. Now this man had a habit of swearing and using very foul language. His language was something awful, and lots of people had spoken to him about it, and very roughly too. One morning at five o'clock he was putting in his horses, and the master came down that morning, and this is what he said: 'Tom, if you must swear, why

don't you wait until you get out on the moors, where nobody can hear you but God?' Tom did not say anything, but when he got away from the houses, where there was nothing to see but moorland, and nothing to hear but the singing of the birds and the humming of the bees, then these words came into his mind, the words that the master had said to him that morning, and Tom began to wonder, 'Why don't I swear now?' and that set him thinking, and he thought to some purpose, and it led to the man's conversion. You see all the rough speaking did not do one bit of good. Lots of people had spoken roughly to him, and it did not make any difference. But the master's gentle word had some effect; that was a word on wheels, you see, and he took notice of it.

There is a story about John Wesley which just illustrates the same thing. When he was an old man—he was a grand old man, everybody liked him—but when he got to be very old, and he had to travel long distances, people thought that it was best that somebody should go with him, and he had

a secretary named Joseph Bradley. Wesley was going to a place to preach, and had been writing some letters, and when he got to the town he asked Joseph to take these letters to the post. It was very close upon service time, so Joseph said, 'I will take them after the preaching.' 'No, you must go now,' said John Wesley; and Joseph got his back up, and said, 'I won't.' 'Then you and I must part,' said Wesley. 'Very good,' said Joseph; and they did not see one another any more that day. Next morning—they were both very early risers—John Wesley met Joseph, and started to talk in this way: 'Joseph, have you considered what I said yesterday?' 'Yes, sir.' 'And must we part?' 'Please yourself, sir.' 'Will you ask my pardon?' 'No, sir.' Then there was a pause, and then John Wesley said, 'Then, Joseph, I must ask yours.' Poor Joseph! Tears came into his eyes in a moment, and he would have gone to fifty posts just then. It was the gentle word that did it. That's what shows the gentleman. Boys, if ever you want to be a gentleman, remember that is what makes a gentleman;

a gentle word, a word on wheels, a gentlemanly word.

You remember—and we can always go to the Saviour for our example—when Jesus had come to have dinner with a gentleman, a woman came in and knelt at the Saviour's feet. You know anybody could come into an Eastern house; the door was always open. Simon looked at this woman, and his lip curled up darkly. He would never have anything to do with such a woman as that; and if he did not actually say so, Jesus knew what he meant, and spoke to the woman. She was a bad woman, or she had been a bad woman, but Jesus spoke to her; and this is what He said to her: 'Woman, go in peace; thy sins are forgiven thee.' Why, she had never been spoken to like that before; everybody had had a rough word for her, but when the Saviour spoke gently, what a difference it made! We find lots of examples of this in the life of Jesus. When He was in Jericho there was a blind man, and lots of people told him to hold his tongue; they were very much annoyed at him.

‘What are you shouting for?’ they said. But Jesus spoke, and when He spoke He spoke very gently. ‘What shall I do for you, my man?’ said Jesus; and the man said, ‘I want my sight,’ and Jesus healed him. Some people once went to hear Jesus, —they were a deputation,—they went to hear Him preach, and when they came back this is what they said: ‘Never man so spake; there has never been a man who spoke like this man.’ Now, children, I want you to speak the same kind of words that Jesus spoke.

There is another kind of word that goes on wheels, and it is a Kind word. Everybody knows when you speak a kind word. Even a dog knows whether you are speaking kindly or unkindly to it; a horse also always knows when he is spoken to kindly. There is nothing more cruel, boys, than an unkind word. They used to tell me when I was a boy—

Sticks and stones will break my bones,  
But words will never hurt me.

That is not true. They will not hurt your bones, but they will hurt you. I said a

kind word is a word that goes on wheels. Now let us look at the Saviour again, for He is always the best example. I will tell you a story about the Saviour that is not in the Bible.

Once when in Jericho He was passing one day by the end of a street, and He noticed that a crowd had collected. (You know how queer some people are. If a man goes into the street and stares at the floor or at the sky for a few minutes, there will soon be a crowd of people staring, first at the floor or the sky, and then at him.) There was a crowd about the end of this narrow street, and they were staring at something on the floor. Now what do you think it was? A poor dead dog; and they made such remarks about it. One man said, 'What an ugly beast!' another said, 'What a dirty thing!' and first there was one remark and then another; and at last somebody on the outside of the crowd said, 'Yes, but look at its lovely teeth.' It was Jesus, who could see something good even in a dead dog, and when everybody else was saying unkind things He could find

a kind word to say. He always saw that which was best in everything and everybody. There was a poor widow woman, and she had not much of this world's possessions,—she had only got two mites, which made a farthing,—and people were coming into the temple, and the collection was made at the door; the rich men put their gifts into the box, and they took care to let everybody see how much they put in, and folks thought how good they were; and then the widow came. I have no doubt lots of people said that she might have kept the two mites herself, for all the good they would do; but the Saviour was looking on, and what do you think He said? —‘The widow put in more than any of them, for she put in all that she had.’ What a kind thing to say, wasn’t it? And when the Saviour was at Jericho (this is a third story of Jesus at Jericho) there was a man there. Nobody liked him, and nobody had anything good to say to him or of him; and he climbed up a tree to see Jesus, and Jesus stopped right in front of him and said, ‘I am going to be your guest to-day,



I am going to dine at your house,' and everybody was surprised. He was speaking kindly to a man who was a publican, and they marvelled at the words of grace which proceeded out of His mouth. There are *two* kinds of words, gentle and kind words.

Now for another. Look in the margin of the Revised Version, and it says this: 'a word fitly spoken,' and in the verse it is 'a word in due season.' A word fitly spoken or a word in due season is a word that goes on wheels. You know sometimes—and I hope the children will all listen to this—it is better not to speak at all; and sometimes even a kind word, if it is not spoken at the right time, will do more harm than good. It will only irritate people. That is the time when, as Carlyle said, 'Silence is golden.' Many people say kind things, but they say them at the wrong time, and then it would be much better if they said nothing at all. A word in season, how good it is if you can just get it in at the right time. I will tell you another story about John Wesley. When John Wesley lived there were not any railways, and of

course there were no motor-cars or 'buses or anything of that sort, and people who travelled had to travel by stage coaches. When John Wesley wanted to get from London to Newcastle he went by stage coach, and the coach had to stop and change horses several times ; and at one stopping place, John Wesley, who had been very much annoyed by a young man in the same coach, took him aside and spoke to him. This man had been annoying everybody by swearing, and by loud and very wrong sort of talk. Several people had reproved him, and he took no notice, so John Wesley took him aside, and said, 'Are you going on to the next stage?' 'Yes.' 'Well, so am I, and I want to ask a favour of you.' 'Yes, what is it?' replied the man. 'If you hear me swearing, I hope you will rebuke me,' said Wesley. Of course the man quite understood. That was how John Wesley rebuked him. You see he knew exactly when to speak. Not when everybody was present, but when he could get the man by himself. It was a word in due season.

I have a friend who is a minister in the east end of London—Mr. Daniells. He calls himself ‘the wise man from the East,’ and so he is. He went to America once, and you know in America their railway journeys are very long. It takes four or five days sometimes, the country is so big; and in one of these American railroad cars there was a very big fellow: he would be six feet two in his stockings, perhaps; and he began to do what I am afraid a great many young men do—he began to swear dreadfully; and lots of people in the car spoke to him about it, but he did not care; and my friend Mr. Daniells—he was away for a holiday—started to talk to him in this way. ‘I should think you are over six foot, aren’t you?’ ‘Yes,’ was the reply. ‘I should say you were an Englishman.’ ‘Yes, sir, I’m an Englishman.’ ‘Is your mother living?’ ‘Yes, sir; she’s in the old country.’ ‘Well, you are one of the handsomest men I have ever seen,’ and then he whispered, ‘But what a pity you have got such a dirty mouth.’ The man pulled out his pocket-handkerchief and

began to wipe around his mouth; then he blushed all over his face, and turned to Mr. Daniells and said, 'I am very sorry, sir,' and there was no more swearing after that. Oh, what a pity it is, isn't it? He didn't take a bit of notice of those who spoke roughly, but when somebody spoke just a word in due season what a difference!

I once told this story to the children in Harrogate, and there was a little lad in the congregation who came from Manchester. He heard that story, and as he went home that day from chapel there was a youth in the street selling *Sunday Chronicles*, and he did not choose his words very well, so this little fellow crept up behind him—the newspaper lad was a lot bigger than he was—and said, 'I say, pity you have got such a dirty mouth,' and then he ran away. But that lad understood what he meant; and, boys, some of you are leaving school and going to work, and there are men who work where you do whose language is not very nice. Do not let anybody say that you have got a dirty mouth. Don't think that it makes a boy into a man

because he can use words of that sort ; it doesn't. You see what I want to get at is this : if you have got to speak to people and reprove them, do it in as nice a way as you can, and not roughly. Try to speak a word that goes on wheels, a word fitly spoken or a word in due season.

Now, let us see if the Saviour did not give us an example. We read that one day when the Saviour was on His way to Capernaum, He was walking ahead of the disciples, though quite near enough to hear what they said. He looked troubled and wearied, and He was very sorry and disappointed at what He heard His disciples saying. They were quarrelling, and the subject of their quarrel was this : which of them was the greatest. Now Jesus did not say anything ; He just walked straight on, and He waited till he got to Capernaum and into the house ; and when He got there He took a little boy—Peter's little boy—and He put him on His knee and put His arms round this little lad, and then He looked at His disciples. And before He spoke at all they knew what He meant ; and then He said this

to them: 'If any of you want to be first in My kingdom, you must be like this little lad, humblest and least. He who would be first of all must be servant of all.' Now it would never have struck them that He heard their quarrelling, but He spoke a word in due season. There was another time when the Saviour had to speak to Peter. Peter was very bold, and he sometimes said things that he did not quite mean. And the Saviour knew what was coming beforehand, and He warned Peter. 'Satan hath desired to have you that he may sift you as wheat, but I have prayed for thee.' How kind it was of Christ to tell him beforehand that He had been praying for him; and then, when the temptation came, Peter remembered that the Lord had been praying for him. That was a word in due season, wasn't it? A word at the right time is a word that goes smoothly, without an effort, a word on wheels.

Now, children, will you try to use words like that? It isn't always easy—I know that as well as anybody. It is not always easy to speak a word that goes on wheels, but I want us all to try. Don't say an unkind

word if you can help it, nor a rough word ;  
and don't speak at the wrong time if you can  
help it. Try to speak a gentle word, a kind  
word, a word in season. All these are words  
that go on wheels, they won't hurt anybody. If  
you speak words like that, everybody will be  
glad to hear you. What you say will be like  
apples of gold in baskets of silver, beautiful  
and graceful. Now I am sure you will  
remember these words.

## PAPER ON PULPIT PRAYERS<sup>1</sup>

I HAVE not chosen to write a paper on this subject because I know more about it than my brethren, but because I want to know. My purpose is to stimulate others to speak frankly, in the hope that a brotherly talk will let in light on a subject which has occasioned no little perplexity to some of us.

We have often discussed preaching, and, as often, we have gone away feeling that we know nothing yet as we ought to know. Our preaching lacks this essential element or that.

I sometimes think there is a danger lest we should discourage one another. And yet the most that one can do who reads a paper in a meeting like this is to indicate his own ideals—and that will inevitably

<sup>1</sup> Read at the Manchester Ministers' Meeting, March 7, 1902.



suggest shortcomings in himself or in others. Now if there is one word in this paper which can be construed as fault-finding, please understand that the fault is in the preacher I hear oftener than any other, and who has, I hope, no severer critic than myself. This paper is written out of my own failures.

I must say, first, then—

*A true prayer makes the sermon possible.*

Without depreciating in the least the value of our frequent discussions on preaching, we must often have felt that a service is usually made or marred before we come to the sermon. While it is no longer possible, I hope, to speak of 'the preliminaries,' there is still a streak of truth in the distinction our predecessors drew between chapel and church: 'Nonconformists are bored by the preacher till the sermon begins, Episcopalians are bored till it ends.' There has been lately, however, a great change for the better in the conduct of public worship. The sermon has not taken a lower place among us, but the service has been levelled up.

I maintain, then, that the whole service is usually made or spoiled before we come

to the sermon. If—speaking the language of our Canaan—we have had a ‘bad time’ in the earlier part of the service—through lack of suitable preparation or fitness, physical, mental, or spiritual—it is scarcely likely, it is barely possible, that the sermon will do all it ought to do. It may be a good sermon—most elaborately prepared, packed full of instruction, in itself a faultless production—yet, if the earlier part of the service has been a failure, the best of sermons will not even instruct our hearers. The seed of the word will fall on ground trodden hard. It will be a fruitless and idle sowing, and in the day of harvest we shall need to be ashamed. If the former part of the service is a failure, the sermon will be ‘delivered’ to an ‘audience’ more or less critical. But in that case, the preacher has lost his most distinctive quality. He is a public speaker, with the same chances of making an impression as any other public speaker. But he has forfeited his highest prerogative. He has descended from very high vantage-ground, from the pulpit to the platform. His people have left the temple and the

altar for the school and the lecture-room. On the other hand, if the 'preliminaries' have been all they should be, the sermon is 'preached' to a 'congregation' devout, worshipful, spiritually receptive.

Perhaps this is the reason why Spurgeon said so emphatically, 'It is my solemn conviction that the prayer . . . ought to be even more considered than the sermon.' A friend of mine in a former circuit in London once told me how she went to hear Spurgeon preach the annual sermon before our Missionary Society at Great Queen Street. One of our missionary secretaries read the Morning Prayers—faultlessly, as missionary secretaries do. Then the man of the golden mouth arose, with an evident sense of relief, and said, 'Let us *pray*.' The prayer was only half a dozen sentences, each one winged, each charged with a holy fervour, but it lifted the people up into an atmosphere in which it was possible to *preach*. They ceased to be an 'audience'; they were a 'congregation.' They did more than listen; they worshipped.

If the earlier part of the service is what

it should be, it will put your hearers into a frame of mind in which it will be impossible to tell you that your sermon was a 'noble effort,' a 'great deliverance,' a 'fine sermon.' If they speak at all, it will be a choking 'God bless you, sir.' More likely, they will grip your hand and say nothing. Your hearers will not be looking forward to the sermon as an 'intellectual treat'—though I believe that sermons nowadays are not a whit less valuable intellectually than in the days of our fathers. They cost just as much in sweat of brain, in conscientiousness. But the intellectual element comes second, not first. We realize that our best people do not come to church for information, for instruction merely—though if we are faithful, they will get that—they come for inspiration and stimulus, the quickening of spiritual desires, the exaltation and enrichment of thought and feeling—for that *renewing of the mind* which transforms ('transfigures,' the word is) those who would otherwise be conformed to this world. I know no name for that transfiguring quality in a sermon, but we cannot fail to realize

its presence or absence. Of all preachers I have ever heard, it was most conspicuous in Professor Henry Drummond. It is found, almost to the same extent, in his pupil Mr. Jowett, and in lesser degree and less frequently in Dr. Parker and Dr. Horton, not at all in the Bishop of Ripon. Bishop Paget's printed sermons are full of it. You find it again, sometimes, in the present Bishop of Durham, to a smaller extent in Bishop Westcott, and not at all in Bishop Lightfoot.

Now that same nameless quality has a hundredfold more scope and power in the best pulpit prayers. Its roots are in the personality of the preacher. As a rule, it must be heard, not read. Transfer a prayer to the printed page, and very often—though not always—the virtue goes out of it. That nameless quality evaporates in the process. It is one thing to read Beecher's prayers; those who heard him tell me it was a very different thing to pray them along with him. But whether in reading or hearing, there are prayers and prayers. There are prayers which bring every

worshipper to the holiest place—to the very footstool of the throne. And there are others which leave us afar off—on the fringes of the outer darkness.

Beneath Thy feet we lie afar,  
And see but shadows of Thy face.

There are prayers which give to the worshippers whose devotions they lead a ready access to the Father's presence—which bring us very near—as suppliants who will never deserve the tender mercy and grace of God. There are other prayers which fill up fifteen minutes, more or less fluently. Whitefield was thinking of this indirect and secondary effect of public prayer when he said to one of his long-winded friends, 'You prayed me into a good frame, and then you prayed me out of it.'

Though the whole gist of this paper is intended to show that public prayer produces a certain impression on the worshipper and brings him into a certain attitude of spirit, I wish to say, with considerable emphasis, that *that* is not the first object of public prayer, and to aim at that directly is the

surest, wofullest way to miss it. The surest way to failure in prayer is to give even half a thought to the impression it makes. That old chestnut about the Yankee reporter will express what I mean very well. That man said far more than he knew, when he wrote about 'the most eloquent prayer ever addressed to a Boston audience.' Prayer is addressed to God. It is not intended to please the fastidious taste of an aesthetic and critical audience. It is not a work of art, it is an act of worship. It is concerned chiefly, and most of all, not with the impression it makes, but with the expression it gives to the awe and reverence, the affection and trust, the hopes and longings, the wonder and sorrow of a penitent and adoring company of worshippers. It should give fitting and adequate expression to the dumb yearnings of our people after holiness and purity, their gratitude, their consecration, their sense of dependence, their perplexities and temptations. It should draw out their devoutest affections, their holiest emotions and aspirations. It should lay open their whole nature to the all-gracious

and sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit.

And yet, if a prayer does this at all adequately, another effect will most surely follow. It will bring the congregation to the feet of God—into the presence-chamber of the blessed and only Potentate, who dwells in the unapproachable light. Every worshipper will feel that the place whereon he stands is holy ground. It is at times like these that

God comes down our souls to meet,  
And glory crowns the mercy seat.

Here we have a great fact, then—that public prayer is primarily expressive, secondarily impressive.

Now let me state, with equal emphasis, a still greater fact. Prayer cannot be either the one or the other—it cannot be prayer at all—except as inspired by the Holy Spirit. In no act is it so imperatively necessary that we become the willing instrument of the Spirit of God. However dignified the expression, however noble the words, however touching and pathetic and impressive the requests, except they are shot through,



filled, permeated with the power of the Spirit of God, there is no true prayer. The words may be well chosen and very beautiful, but, as Dr. Parker phrases it, 'it is as if a skeleton should open its cold mouth and chatter with its lifeless teeth.' The sonorous words are like dry bones till the breath from the four winds blows upon them. The body of a prayer—the mere wording of it—may be exquisitely beautiful, but if it lacks that Breath of Life, that touch of Fire, it will influence nobody. It is not the enticing words of man's wisdom we need, so much as the demonstration of the Spirit and of power. Then even poor and commonplace words will glow with an inner fire, and beat and palpitate with an inner life. Then our prayer becomes urgent, prevalent. Then we pray 'in the Spirit'—the Spirit prays in and through us. Then broken, halting words—'groanings which cannot be uttered'—will express the subtle shades of hope and fear and desire, which in less exalted states of feeling we should find it impossible to express at all.

Now, fortunately, it is impossible to counterfeit true prayer. We cannot deceive

ourselves. We cannot deceive others. Most of us can remember occasions, now and then, when we have filled up ten minutes with vain repetitions ; when, for some reason, our words would not kindle. They lacked wings. They were correct, conventional, but cold, dewless, barren, dead. We have almost wished that the pulpit floor had been some horrible pit, that we might hide ourselves from the face of our people. For there is no act which so lays bare the soul of a man as public prayer, often repeated before the same congregation. Many a sensitive man shrinks back appalled at the completeness of the self-revelation involved. It is like a foretaste of judgement to come. Our people seldom speak of it ; most of them make large allowances, but they know. They know whether our souls are a palace fair within, or whether we live in a shabby structure with an imposing and pretentious elevation. I well remember one day in the beginning of my ministry, when a white-haired local preacher said to me, ‘ We like to hear a man pray, sir, as if he were no stranger at the throne of grace.’ The words

were spoken very kindly, but they cut like a lash. These are the days when we wonder if our people would tolerate a liturgy—when we covet earnestly a London circuit and the Morning Prayers.

It is no part of my purpose to discuss the relative value of a liturgy and free prayer; but we all know which is easier for the preacher. There is much to be said on both sides, and as Methodist preachers we are not committed to either. But for our purpose I am of opinion that free prayer is incomparably better, if we have grace to use it rightly—if we are fit instruments for the Spirit of God. But we must pay the price. It will call out to the fullest exercise the brightest activities of our nature. True prayer makes great demands on us. It drains the vital forces. We must be alive to the very finger tips. The words must be charged with vitality. They must come from our inmost souls—from the deep recesses of character. If they are words of true prayer, they have passed through the heart, and are stained with its blood. Do you remember the passage in one of Carlyle's

letters in which he describes the completion of his *French Revolution*? 'What I know of it is, that it has come hot out of my own soul, born in blackness, whirlwind, and sorrow, that it has gone as near to choking the life out of me as any task I have ever undertaken.' Prayer must come 'hot out of our own soul'—it must be the expression of our best selves.

*Then*, through the mid complaint of my confession,  
Then, through the pang and passion of my prayer,  
Leaps, with a start, the shock of His possession,  
Thrills me, and touches, and the Lord is there.

I have tried to place before you two main thoughts on this subject—so axiomatic that they might almost be taken for granted. Yet I felt bound to state them with some emphasis, lest I should leave on your minds an impression of false proportion in what is to follow :—

I. Prayer is an act of worship directed to God, the expression of the desires and religious feelings of the congregation.

II. It is only possible in and through the Spirit of God. Incidentally I have tried to make clear two other points—

1. The relation of prayer to the other parts of the service. By creating a certain impression it makes the sermon possible.

2. Its relation to ourselves. It necessitates the fullest self-revelation. It calls out and taxes our fullest powers.

If these points are clear, I should like to say something else. We must pray with the spirit, but with the understanding also. I would say as Spurgeon did: *We must prepare our prayers.* By that, Spurgeon probably meant that we must prepare ourselves—our own hearts—that we must be in a praying mood. Similarly, Dr. Parker, when asked if he prepared his prayers, replied evasively, ‘I prepare myself.’ I would say all that, and much more. We must prepare the topics of our prayers, even their phraseology if necessary. I shall want to qualify that statement presently, but first let me repeat it. We must prepare our prayers; they are worthy of much more time and attention than we usually give to them. It will not be necessary for some of our brethren to make the least *verbal* preparation. They are naturally fluent. They can main-

tain a constant freshness of phraseology. They are so steeped in the Scriptures, and in the best devotional literature, that the lofty word, the fitting word, is always within easy reach. But even these gifted brethren will need to choose topics suitable for the occasion. We must prepare our prayers. Now let me qualify the statement. It is not always necessary to use what we have prepared. It would be a grievous mistake slavishly to adhere to that; a liturgy would be infinitely preferable. If any part of an effort is spent in trying to recall a lost train of thought, preparation is no longer a help, but a distraction. If a train of thought is lost, let it go. Preparation is not intended to give artistic completeness to our prayers, but to put at the disposal of the Spirit a furnished mind. We know not how to pray as we ought, and therefore the Spirit was given to help our infirmities, but never to make amends for our indolence. In every act of public prayer we must venture something. We must 'let ourselves go.' If we cling to any 'form of sound words' we shall be hampered as a timid swimmer is hampered

by bladders and belts. Let us trust the buoyant deep. Let us readily yield to the inward prompting of the Spirit. Ideas and words will come as we need them. But they will come more readily and easily to a mind prepared by previous meditation. We are not always equally 'fit.' We may be pressed with business, worried with the care of the churches, run down in health, infected with the 'sick hurry' of these restless days. Then, what will happen, if there has been no previous preparation? We shall wander aimlessly from one subject to another, repeating rapid commonplaces in threadbare phrases. Phillips Brooks tells us that he once saw a card in a London bookseller's window with these words on it, 'Limp Prayers.' We have all heard limp prayers at times—prayers with no backbone of thought in them. What Dr. Marcus Dods says of private prayers is much more true of public prayers : 'Prayer is but a deluding form, that means nothing, expects nothing, and receives nothing, if meditation has not provided its material.' Without such devout and reverent meditation we are not meet for the Master's use.

Other things being equal, the Holy Spirit will make the best use of the best furnished mind either in the sermon or the prayer. The question was once asked of a famous Welsh preacher (Henry Rees), 'What kind of sermon will the Holy Spirit use for the conversion of others?' He answered, 'That kind which would be most effective if there were no Holy Spirit.'

When I began to preach, I should have thought it unseemly, irreverent, a sign of mistrust in the Holy Spirit, to 'prepare' a prayer. I remember with what feelings of bewilderment, almost resentment, I first read this sentence in Dr. Dale's *Lectures on Preaching*: 'Before you have been very long in the ministry, I think it very likely that your public prayers will occasion you great perplexity and humiliation. . . . In the earlier years of your ministry, most of you will, I think, find it wise to make definite preparation for your prayers as well as for your sermon.' A year in a wide country circuit saw no abatement of my surprise at that sentence. Then I was sent to a circuit where I had to lead the prayers of the same



congregation, or part of the same congregation, at least four times every week, and my prayers lost their freshness and fervour. I have written this paper in the hope that some younger brother may be spared the miseries I then endured, and the greater miseries which that long-suffering congregation endured, for the greater part of three years.

Premeditation is the remedy. But do not expect that even that will be a never-failing panacea. Sometimes, even while we muse, the fire does not kindle.

We cannot kindle when we will  
The fire which in the heart resides ;  
The spirit bloweth and is still,  
In mystery our soul abides.

Sometimes, even when we ascend the lonely hillside with the Master, for quiet thought and prayer, sleep will overpower us through long unconscious hours, and only for a hasty moment shall we catch a glimpse of His surpassing glory and hear the Heavenly Voice. In these duller moods, our sluggish spirits may be quickened by the remembrance of better days.

Our surroundings may seriously affect us—like atmospheric conditions. If we live in a keen, bracing, sunlit air we often have a sense of freedom and serenity, of power and victory in our prayers. If we live on low malarial flats, where the murky atmosphere closes down upon our souls and damps down their fires to smoke, then prayer—public prayer, at least—becomes a burden and an effort—intolerable. It is easier to pray in the bracing atmosphere of a praying congregation. It is always easiest, I think, to pray at home—among a folk you know intimately—all the sweet and smart of personal relations, of beating hearts and meeting eyes—all their joys and sorrows, fears and hopes.

Our visiting-lists will provide us amply with topics for prayer—especially if we read them as through the Master's eyes. The pastor who can pray with and for his people will get closer—far closer—to them than the most eloquent preacher who ever held them spellbound with his witchery of words. Every time we lead our people to the throne of grace we add another strand

to the strong cord which binds a pastor to his flock—for three years—always provided we draw near wearing the priestly breast-plate on which our people's names are graven; if we are touched with the feeling of their infirmities—that touch of nature which makes us kin. Our prayers will never be unreal then. The varied needs of our people are our own—we have *made* them our own. And if we can profit by experience, if the added years bring deepened sympathy, a quicker insight, a finer sensitiveness, a tenderer pity, we shall know our people's needs far better than they know them. We shall be increasingly able to give fitting expression to their half-formed resolves, the kindling of hope, the confession of penitence which trembles on their hesitant lips, the deep-rooted struggle for the better which is going on under the most unpromising exteriors. And it may be, even those who come to scoff will remain to pray. For we must remember, too, that there is always a proportion of our congregations who are undevout—who come to a service with no more preparation of

heart than if it were some entertainment. We shall reach these soonest and most surely through the prayers.

We shall find abundance of topics, I have said, in our visiting-lists. But if we confine ourselves to these, the *range* of our prayers will be narrow and poor. Our people will want to pray for others besides themselves, for those outside their own congregation and outside the pale of all the churches, for great municipal, national, and imperial interests, for the greater interests of the kingdom of God. I cannot go into details on the subsidiary questions involved here—the elements which go to make true prayer—thanksgiving, confession, intercession, and the rest—the extent to which reference may be fittingly made to current events. It would take another paper to deal adequately with these. I will only say this: it is not necessary to reproduce the first three pages of the *Spectator* in the Sunday's prayers. And this, further: we cannot expect each of our prayers to be as comprehensive as a liturgy. Amid the abundance of topics we must choose those most appropriate to

the occasion. We shall choose more wisely, and from a wider range, if we study the great liturgies, especially the Book of Common Prayer, the prayers of Beecher, Parker, Hunter, Martineau—or, better than any of these, the Directories for Public Worship issued by each of the Presbyterian churches. Such study will do us double service. It will not only supply us with varied and suitable topics, it will give us words which are at once simple, grave, dignified, transparent, direct, nervous—words which will express the multitudinous needs of a thousand worshippers.

If we would learn how the prayers should be in keeping with the rest of the service—lessons, psalms, hymns—let us study the prayers of George Dawson and T. T. Lynch. Our own hymn - book, too, will help us. Some of us will remember what a thrill went through a crowded congregation in the Central Hall, and what a sob of suppressed ‘Amens,’ when Mr. Campbell Morgan prayed on the day of the late Queen’s death—

‘Hold Thou Thy Cross before her closing eyes.’

Another line would have spoilt it; but that one line, just then, was worth a hundred collects. To take one more example, Charles Garrett's power in prayer was due, in part, to his effective use of the hymn-book.

The prayers of Paul will help us, and the recorded prayers of Paul's Lord and ours. These words of Scripture are more valuable to us than the stateliest liturgies. They have gathered round them even more sacred thoughts and memories than those of any prayer-book.

Above all, the Old Testament is specially helpful: the books of Psalms, Second Isaiah, Jeremiah, Hosea. There is something in the genius of Hebrew thought and expression which makes it peculiarly suitable for prayers. It is not philosophic, scientific; it is simple, vivid, intense, pictorial, suggestive, akin to poetry rather than prose. Addison, speaking of the introduction of Hebraisms into our colder English speech, says, 'They warm and animate our language, they give it force and energy, and convey our thoughts in ardent and intense phrases. There is

something in this kind of diction that often sets the mind in a flame and makes our hearts burn within us. How cold and dead is a prayer, composed in the most eloquent forms of speech, when it is not heightened by that solemnity of phrase which may be drawn from the sacred writings.'

I will conclude a paper already far too long with one more sentence from Dr. Dale. It is a weighty sentence, and must do duty for many paragraphs: 'Above all, you will remember that unless your own spirit is disciplined for communion with God, all other preparation will be of no avail.'

## A MODEL FOR PREACHERS<sup>1</sup>

Brethren and fathers, hear ye the defence which I now make unto you.—ACTS xxii. 1.

*[Printed from notes.]*

THE topic of preaching is one which far surpasses all others in interest to you and me; it is the work to which, by the grace of God, we purpose to give the best years of our life. We are ‘called’ to be ‘preachers of the gospel.’ To give you anything like technical instruction in preaching is outside my province. I have nothing new or startling to say. I am a preacher like the rest of you, slowly learning my craft, not one who has already attained. Hence, rather than try to give you any wisdom of my own, I have chosen a passage of Scripture as a concrete example—one of the best of sermons by the greatest preacher

<sup>1</sup> A Communion address prepared for the students at Didsbury College, but not delivered. See p. 13.



God has given to His Church. All that I have to say is based on Acts xxi., xxii. I will take the usual three heads, and if I state them beforehand we shall know where we are.

A sentence from Dale's *Fellowship* may serve to suggest them. 'I was reading the other day an explanation of what constitutes effective preaching, and the writer said, "It is not the words of the preacher that produce the impression, but the man behind the words." That is not even half the truth. It is Christ behind the man that produces the impression.'

Here, then, are our three divisions in the order of their relative importance: 1. *The sermon.* 2. *The man behind the sermon.* 3. *The Christ behind the man.*

We learn from this chapter how Paul had longed and prayed for an opportunity to preach the gospel in Jerusalem. He had besought the Lord for it from the first. He thought, naturally, that his witness would be most effective where the facts were known and could be verified, among the men he knew well and loved

most dearly, in the city where he had spent most of his life. When the privilege was refused him, his loyalty was strained almost to the point of disobedience. God had fairly thrust him out to labour among the Gentiles, as He now thrusts forth labourers into His harvest. But once more he is back again in Jerusalem; the opportunity has come at the long last. What will he make of it?

1. *The sermon.* It displays two characteristics which seem contradictory. First, its amazing cleverness; second, its equally amazing simplicity.

*Clever* is not a word we usually associate with an apostle, though none would deny Paul's natural gifts and acquired faculties. He was the most accomplished man of his time. In mental grasp, in powers of thought and speech, there was not his equal in Jerusalem that day—and every power was placed at the disposal of his Lord. Note the consummate cleverness with which he made his points; the difficult audience, the unfavourable conditions under which he spoke, the unpopular truth he stated—

God's mercy to the Gentiles. Observe the skill with which he led up to his main point, and kept back the unpalatable truth till the last word of the last sentence. But he got it out; he concealed nothing, modified nothing, but declared the whole counsel of God. The word *Gentile* was like spark to gunpowder; it set all their passions ablaze, and they literally howled him down.

Note, too, the conciliatory spirit of the whole address. Though he could read hatred on almost every face of the surging mob, he yet begins: 'Brethren and fathers.' With unexampled courtesy and magnanimity he puts the best possible construction on their behaviour. They had half murdered him, and would have torn him limb from limb but for the interference of the Roman soldiers, and yet he assumes that they thought they were doing God service — 'being zealous for God, even as ye all are this day.' He believed in these men against all appearances, against even themselves. If we cease to believe in the men we speak to, we throw away our chance

of influencing them. We should be anxious not only to speak the truth but to get a hearing for it. It is not enough to deliver our message in a 'take it or leave it' spirit. Unless we get a hearing, we have failed. No truth can be said to be taught unless the pupils have learned it. Every word of this address is skilfully chosen so as to disarm prejudice and gain a hearing. He speaks with deepest respect of the Sanhedrin. He never once mentions the hated name of Jesus, though he is preaching Christ from beginning to end. So much for the amazing cleverness of the sermon.

*Its amazing simplicity.* He spoke to the people in their own mother-tongue. That is a hint worth taking! When they heard it they were 'the more silent.' Read your Bible and Bunyan, and you will find in them the simplest, homeliest Saxon. The vocabulary of the philosopher, the commentator, the theologian, is out of place in the pulpit. If you would gain a hearing for your message, your speech must be simple—as that of a great poem is simple. Tennyson's *Dora* contains only eleven

trisyllables in the whole of its one hundred and seventy lines. In the 23rd Psalm, one hundred and eleven of its hundred and eighteen words are Saxon words.

The substance of the sermon as well as its language was characterized by simplicity. It was a simple, earnest, straightforward statement of facts. Beginning with a reference to the revered founder of the school of Gamaliel, he goes on to give a 'plain account' of his own conversion and religious experience. It was a short, plain, straight talk; obviously, transparently truthful; a feature all the more remarkable because a story so full of dramatic incident is apt to grow in the telling. Paul's words have the dignity and directness of a man wholly in earnest. But the most distinctive and characteristic thing about the sermon remains—it was intensely personal.

2. *The man behind the sermon.* 'It is not words that produce the impression.' In the *Iliad* Homer makes an ugly, ill-tempered, sharp-tongued man speak against Agamemnon, and as far as words go, the speech is one of the finest passages in the *Iliad*; but

it produces no effect. If you hear a sermon preached, say, by a man like Hugh Price Hughes, or R. J. Campbell, and then read the same sermon in print, all the virtue is gone out of it. There was something behind the words which gave it weight and force.

That mysterious something behind the words which we vaguely call 'personality' constitutes about three-quarters of the influence we can bring to bear on those who hear us. What we say is mere words, and of little consequence compared with that force behind. Emerson somewhere says, 'I cannot hear what you say; what you are is shouting so loud in my ears.'

A preacher should not merely deal in arguments and truths, that is to say, in bare impersonal truth. In so far as he does that, a mere debater has the same chance of producing an impression as any other public speaker. But the truth we deal with is truth with a difference—a difference that is found in the personality of the speaker. It is truth which has been verified in your experience. A preacher is not a debater, but a witness to certain facts which are

part and parcel of his life. This and this happened to me; it is fact; I can vouch for it; my whole manhood is pledged to the truth of it. A Scotsman was asked, 'How do you *know* you are saved?' 'I happened to be there when it was done,' was his reply. Argument can be answered by argument; you may tear it to shreds, juggle with the words of it, explain it away; but personal experience—when a man bears witness to a personal fact, he has said the last word. There is not a word of argument in this sermon. It is an account of his conversion, and its results in present experience. An official at St. James's Hall once said, 'Mr. Hughes preached practically the same sermon every Sunday night for five years.' It was the story of his own conversion. That was true Pauline preaching.

The gospel you preach is as old and changeless as sunlight, but you—you are the bit of glass which gives it colour and individuality. Coming through you the light is refracted at a new angle, and is therefore different from that of any other preacher. You will appeal to some in the congregation

as no other preacher can. If the glass is defective, the light will be defective too.

3. *The Christ behind the man.* It is the light which does the work, not the glass through which it shines. There is a sense in which Paul's sermon is full of himself; but the self is not the old self, not the Saul of chapter ix.

He had come up to Jerusalem with his heart full of the glorious work which God had wrought through him among the Gentiles, and all he wanted was a word of sympathy from his fellow countrymen, and a friendly greeting for his Gentile converts. And *this* was what he got! Anonymous detractors had made a systematic attempt to undo his work and belittle his influence; except from the apostles, not a word of recognition did he win; not a word of thanks to God for the work which had been the breath of his life. Instead he was told that certain 'influential men' thought him not orthodox. He must keep right with them, if he can; and with a bitter, choking, stifling sensation, he accepts the suggestion that is made for his doing so. There are



four beggars under a Nazirite vow—let him associate himself with them, and make one of five to go through certain legal rites at his expense to show his orthodoxy! Paul must have known that he was worth all the rest of these influential men, and needed not their imprimatur; a man of high spirit too, and naturally proud; one might have thought he would have scorned to do it. But he did it!

He was mobbed and half murdered by the men he was attempting to conciliate. In the very act of showing honour to the law he was charged with being a hypocrite—‘This is the man that teacheth all men everywhere against the people, and the law, and this place.’ And he knew the charges to be both false and malicious. He was thrust out of the temple lest it should be defiled by his blood; he would have been killed on the spot but for the interference of the Roman authorities, and they would kill him now were he not ringed round with Roman spears. The thwarted mob is wrought up to fury. They raise the same murderous cry which rang in those streets

years before: 'Away with him!' There is the same mad outburst as when Stephen was done to death.

Saul of Tarsus was by nature as hot-blooded as any in the crowd! From his place of vantage the old Saul would have hurled hot, hissing words into their midst; but in that wild scene of terror, and hate, and passion, there was one man calm, collected, self-possessed. 'Brethren, fathers!' There is no trace of resentment, of bitterness, or scorn; only grief for their blindness and love for their souls.

O to save these! to perish for their saving,  
Die for their life, be offered for them all!

If they but knew Him! Every word of his address, every gesture, pointed to his Lord. 'We preach not ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake.' If we show forth Christ, then our gospel is the power of God unto salvation; if they do not see Christ, nothing else matters—no gifts, no qualifications. Christ.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See p. 13.

## WORSHIP

### FOR THE NEW YEAR

O GOD, Author of all our good, we are thankful for the return of Thy Sabbath, the token of Thy covenant with us, and the foretaste of our eternal rest. We are thankful Thou hast brought us to Thy house again; let it be warm with Thy welcome, bright with Thy love. We seek Thy help again that we may profitably use the opportunities of this day, and that we may hallow it in all our thoughts. Let Thy word be spirit and life to us, and Thy praise a great delight. Thy statutes have been our songs in the house of our pilgrimage—Thy presence has been our rest. As we set our faces this day towards the unknown future, we seek again Thy protection and help. If Thy presence go not with us, carry us not up hence. And living day by day

with Thee, do Thou establish us in fellowship with that Life which is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

O Lord, with Thee a thousand years are as one day, even as yesterday when it is past; and if the days of our years are few, Thou hast made them so, and Thou art good. Grant us this day a token for good. We seek Thy blessing on the year on which we are permitted to enter—without that it can only be a great void. Let it be to us the acceptable year of the Lord—one of the years of the right hand of the Most High.

We give Thee unfeigned thanks for all the mercies of the year to which we have said Farewell. We thankfully remember all the way in which the Lord our God has led us. As Thou hast crowned the year with Thy goodness, so may we with our gratitude. May the remembrance of Thy mercy fill us with a higher courage and a nobler faith, and remembering whence our help cometh, may we determine henceforth to know nothing among men save Christ and Him

crucified. And may every day alike be hallowed by a whole-hearted consecration to Thee. Give us one single, steadfast aim; help us to serve Thee with an undivided heart, to glorify Thee in our bodies and spirits, which are Thine.

Wherein our purposes are right, do Thou strengthen them every one; where they are founded in vanity and marred by self-seeking, break them, and incline our hearts to better things. May we not build with hay and stubble, but with gold and silver and costly stones, with material which will stand the test of fire and time.

Give us courage to face every duty, and strength to do it; make us willing to ally ourselves with every good cause; help us fearlessly and frankly to confess Thee before men. Give special grace to those who live and work in places where the Master's name is scorned; help them to let their light shine before men. By the grace of Christ help each one of us to lead another to the fountain where we found healing and help.

Let mercy and grace and the peace of God abide on all the churches, especially on the

united effort they are about to make for the Master's sake. Bring all believing hearts nearer to Thee and nearer to each other. May He who walks among the golden candlesticks—He of the flaming eyes, and feet like burnished brass, and voice of many waters—fill us with His strength and consecrate us again to His own service.

Spirit of God, make this church Thy dwelling-place, and let Thy presence burn up all that is small and mean and impure. As we hope to be used in Thy service, cleanse us and keep us clean.

O Lord, this day is Thine, this place is Thy house, and we come together in the name of Christ Thy Son. May our whole conduct and conversation be in keeping with such thoughts. We come to take our part in praise and prayer and worship; may we do it as those who hope to join in the song of the redeemed in heaven. May the thoughts of this day and this house have power to rule the week which is to come. Let whatever is here made plain to us concerning Thy will and our duty remain

with us, a guiding light, an uplifting and sanctifying power. May the rest we enjoy to-day fit us for the labour which is appointed for us, and serve to remind us of the endless rest, the eternal Sabbath day. Forbid that any of us should fail to enter into that rest through disobedience or unbelief; but to-day let all gracious and heavenly influences be about us, lest we harden our hearts and shut our ears to the voice which calls all who are weary and heavy-laden to come to Thee.

O God, Thou art our Father in heaven, for no other could have borne us and borne with us as Thou hast done. We thank Thee that we have known and believed Thy love to us. We have seen Thee in the gospel of our Saviour. It was He who told us of Thy good pleasure. Thou willest that all should be saved—would that all knew and all believed His message.

Hear our united and earnest prayer that the ministration of Thy truth to-day may bring saving knowledge to many who come within its influence; teach us how to reach the ignorant—those who are strangers to the

gospel of Christ, who know nothing of the Divine love, and little, if anything, of human sympathy. May Thy Spirit teach us how to appeal to those who know the gospel as far as words can teach it, yet whose lives seem wholly untouched by it.

To those who have the form of godliness, but know nothing of its power and the presence of the unseen world, may the appeal of the living Christ and the whispers of the slighted Spirit be effective.

Especially we pray for all in this sanctuary, that we may come into close and living touch with God, who created us for His glory. If any of us have desired only half a gospel—accepted it when it tells of salvation and ignored it when it tells of duty to God and man, craved it for comfort but resented its rebuke, desired its rewards but shirked the conflict to which it calls us—for all these things do Thou forgive us.

We confess before Thee our selfishness, our worldliness, our want of enthusiasm, and our distrust of Thee. Thou knowest all. May our better self prevail, that we may embrace the will of Christ in its completeness



as the law of our life. Help us to accept it and do it, and leave all consequences in His care. If we are called to suffer for righteousness' sake, may we not think it strange. If in the fiery trial the furnace be heated seven times hotter than before, may there be One in the midst to succour us. Inasmuch as we are partakers of Christ's sufferings, may we rejoice. Grant that at the revelation of the glory of Jesus Christ we may rejoice with exceeding joy. May we be among those that are arrayed in white robes and have come out of great tribulation.

If we have coveted the victory apart from the fight, if we have thought of our weakness and been dismayed, when our flesh and our heart fail us be Thou the strength of our heart and portion for ever. Give to the disheartened a renewal of courage; bring back the hope which has fled; grant us a new sight of Him who is our wisdom and sanctification and redemption, and may He be all in all.

